

COMPLETE NOVELS BY ELIZABETH WATSON

SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

NOV. 1911

15 CENTS



TRAITS OF WELL KNOWN ACTORS ILLUSTRATED SHOW
ORIES BY MARIE MANNING HOLMAN F. DAY ANNE O' HAGAN
MORGAN SILL CHAS. BATTALL LOOMIS ETC. ETC.



HEARS CHURCH BELLS AFTER LONG DEAFNESS

For the first time in years, this good lady, who has been deaf, hears the church bells. She is in ecstasy. Only this morning has she been able to hear the prattle of her grandchildren and the voice of her daughter. Twenty-three years ago she first found herself becoming deaf and, despite numerous remedies, medical advice, hearing devices and specialists' treatments, she found it more and more difficult to hear. Of late years she was harassed by peculiar noises in the head, which added to her misery. At last she was told of a book which explains how to regain perfect hearing without costly apparatus or drugs. She got this book and learned how to quickly become freed from deafness and head-noises. Observe her delight in this hypothetical illustration! Any reader of SMITH'S MAGAZINE who desires to obtain one of these books can do so free of cost by merely writing to the author, Dr. George E. Contant, 195 A, Station E, New York, N. Y. He will be pleased to mail it promptly, postpaid, to anyone whose hearing is not good. This offer will bring joy to many homes.

Vic
E
Victor
Exhib
ar m,
turnta
ampli

mar
high
reco

sho
gre
hon
and

New

\$15 for this genuine Victor-Victrola

Victor-Victrola IV, \$15

Equipped with all the latest Victor improvements, including Exhibition sound box, tapering arm, "goose-neck", ten-inch turntable and concealed sound-amplifying features.



Other styles of
the Victor-Victrola
\$50, \$75, \$100,
\$150, \$200, \$250
Victors \$10 to \$100

The fact that this instrument bears the famous Victor trademark and is a *genuine* Victor-Victrola guarantees to you the same high quality and standard of excellence so well established and recognized in all products of the Victor Company.

There is no reason on earth why you should hesitate another moment in placing this greatest of all musical instruments in your home.

All we ask is that you go to any music store and hear this new Victor-Victrola.

Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.

Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors.

New Victor Records are on sale at all dealers on the 28th of each month



Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

V
1
4
2
N
O
V
1
1
XUM

My Magazine **FREE** Investing for Profit For Six Months

Send me your name and address right now and I will send you **INVESTING FOR PROFIT** magazine absolutely free for six months. It tells how to get the utmost earnings from your money—how to tell good investments—how to pick the most profitable of sound investments. It reveals how bankers and capitalists make \$1000 grow to \$25,000—in fact, gives you the investing information that should enable you to make your money grow proportionately. I have decided this month to give 500 six-month subscriptions to **INVESTING FOR PROFIT** free. Every copy is

Worth At Least \$10

to every investor—perhaps fortune. Send your name and address now, mention this paper and get a free introductory subscription. Conditions may prevent repeating this offer. Better take it now. You'll be willing to pay 10c a copy after you have read it six months. **H. L. BARBER, Pub., R. 418, 30 Jackson Blvd., Chicago**



Health

"Fat, oil, butter, cream and eggs certainly caused my catarrh and deafness, but your diet of lean meats, green vegetables, fruits, etc. cured me in a few weeks. My brain power and complexion improved tremendously, and I succeeded financially."

... Different classes of foods cause different diseases, but correct combinations cure. Send ten cents for instructive booklet: (1) The Brainy Diet Cure, (2) Diet vs. Drugs, (3) Effects of Foods, (4) Key to Longevity.

G. H. Brinkler, Food Expert, Dept. 42, Washington, D. C.

BE AN ACTOR

ACTRESS OR ORATOR

Most fascinating, best-paying profession in the world. Thousands on the stage

EARN \$25 TO \$800 WEEKLY!

We teach Dramatic Art, Elocution, Oratory at your home. Qualify you for a good-paying position. Our method is scientific and comprehensive. Develops power and originality! Six years successful teaching! Genuine instruction by expert! Have placed hundreds on the road to fame! Write for particulars. Book on Stage Life, FREE!

CHICAGO SCHOOL OF ELOCUTION, 820 Grand Opera House, CHICAGO

YOU CAN MAKE CIGARETTES LIKE THESE

A Practical Novelty for Cigarette Smokers

TURKO CIGARETTE ROLLER

Sent postpaid for **25cts.** Address,

Turko Roller Co., 135 William St., New York

Traveling Salesmen and Saleswomen Wanted

Write While You Learn. We now have on file letters from thousands of Wholesale and Manufacturing firms who are anxious to employ Salesmen and Saleswomen capable of earning from \$1,000.00 to \$10,000.00 a year and expenses. No former experience needed to get one of these good positions. We will teach you to be a high grade Salesman or Saleswoman in eight weeks by mail and our Free Employment Bureau will assist you to secure a position where you can earn good wages while you are learning Practical Salesmanship. Write today for full particulars, list of good openings and testimonials from over a thousand persons we have recently placed in good positions.

Address, Nearest Office, Dept. 107

National Salesmen's Training Association
Chicago New York Kansas City New Orleans Seattle U.S.A.

YOUR NEWSDEALER

maintains his store at considerable expense. He must pay for help, rent and lighting. He carries many articles that you would never dream of ordering direct from manufacturers, and is, therefore, of great service when you need a newspaper, a cigar or a box of stationery. Then why not give him all of your custom and so help make his business profitable?

Tell him to show you samples of **AINSLIE'S, POPULAR, SMITH'S, PEOPLE'S, NEW STORY** and **TOP-NOTCH** magazines. Select those you want and he will gladly deliver them to your residence regularly.

Then, when you want something good to read, you will not have to search for it.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York

A INSLEE ART PRINTS. REPRODUCED IN FULL COLORS FROM ORIGINAL PAINTING

SIZE 12½ x 15½ INCHES, MOUNTED ON HEAVY MAT READY FOR FRAMING. THIS EXQUISITE PASTEL, BY THE CELEBRATED ARTIST, PENRHYN STANLAWS, IS ONE OF THE LEADING PAINTINGS OF NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TEN. SENT SECURELY PACKED TO ANY ADDRESS, POST-
\$1.00
AGE PREPAID, UPON RECEIPT OF

AINSLIE PUBLISHING COMPANY
EIGHTY-ONE SEVENTH AVE. NEW YORK

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

Vol. XIV

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 2

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

CONTENTS

FOR - NOVEMBER - 1911

Cover Design	<i>Ch. Weber-Ditzler</i>	
Theatrical Art Studies		165
Sixteen New Portraits of Well-known Actors.		
The Fighting Doctor—A Serial	<i>Helen R. Martin</i>	181
Illustrated by G. C. Pugsley.		
In Schoolhouse Lane—A Poem	<i>J. J. Meehan</i>	207
Municipal Perfection—A Nautical Ballad	<i>Wallace Irwin</i>	208
Illustrated by Hy. Mayer.		
The Breakfast Cap—A Story	<i>Hildegard Lavender</i>	210
Illustrated by Harriet Adair Newcomb.		
Will o' the Wisp—A Poem	<i>Chas. C. Jones</i>	214
The Gray Muff—A Story	<i>Marie Manning</i>	215
Illustrated by H. M. Bunker.		
The Pension—A Story	<i>Anne O'Hagan</i>	226
Illustrated by H. Haygarth Leonard.		
The Same Man—A Sermon	<i>Charles Battell Loomis</i>	233
For the Honor of the Firm—A Story	<i>Louise Morgan Sill</i>	237
Illustrated by Warren Y. Claff.		
Whom the Gods Would Destroy	<i>Elmore Elliott Peake</i>	243
A Complete Novel		
Illustrated by R. Emmett Owen.		
Manna—A Story	<i>Martha McCulloch-Williams</i>	283
Illustrated by L. F. A. Lorenz.		
A Deal in "Thrill-of-Life"—A Story	<i>Holman F. Day</i>	291
Illustrated by Victor Perard.		
Across the Footlights	<i>Howard Fitzalan</i>	302
The Trail of the Sheridan Heir	<i>Virginia Middleton</i>	307
V.—THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.		
Illustrated by Sigurd Schou.		
What the Editor Has to Say		322
Health and Beauty of the Eyes, Brows, and Lashes	<i>Dr. Lillian Whitney</i>	324
Illustrated with Photographs.		

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$1.50

SINGLE COPIES 15 CENTS

Monthly Publication issued by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE, 79-80 Seventh Avenue, New York City.
 ORMOND G. SMITH, President, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City; GEORGE C. SMITH, Secretary and Treasurer,
 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.
 Copyright, 1911, by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE, in the United States and Great Britain. All rights reserved.
 Publishers everywhere are cautioned against using any of the contents of this Magazine either wholly or in part.
 Entered as Second-class Matter, at the New York Post Office, according to an Act of
 Congress, March 3, 1879, by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE.
 WARNING—Do not subscribe through agents unknown to you personally. Complaints
 reach us daily from victims of such swindlers.

XUM

Here is the first Hornless Graphophone

for \$25-the "Lyric"

HERE is the newest musical instrument in the field—a hornless Columbia Graphophone offered at \$25 to those who want the latest improvement in Graphophones, and yet who believe \$25 is enough to pay.

The "Lyric" Columbia is everything that a high grade instrument ought to be, and very much more than one could expect who knows the seeming simplicity but actual delicacy of the construction of a perfect sound-reproducing mechanism.

Its **quality** of tone is beyond improvement—and its **volume** of tone is surprising. It is remarkably condensed and compact, the cabinet measuring 13 1-2 inches square at the base, and 7 inches high. It is built of clear-grained oak, and well joined and finished. The reproducer is the Columbia "Concert Grand"—the latest type and the best ever produced. The motor is a typical soundless Columbia double-spring motor, running three 10-inch records with one winding, and can be wound while running. It plays either 10-inch or 12-inch records (Columbia or any other make). Convenient adjustment of speed is provided for in connection with the start-and-stop device.

The "Lyric" is an extraordinary \$25 worth. "**Hearing is believing.**" Columbia-dealers everywhere are prepared to play the Columbia "Demonstration" Double-Disc Record on this instrument, and hand you new catalogs of all Columbia instruments, and of records by Nordica, Fremstad, Mary Garden, Alice Nielsen, Bonci, Zenatello, Constantino, Bispham, Lipkowska, Boninsegna, Cavalieri, Emmy Desdin, Sammarco, Anselmi, Baklanoff, Mardones, Amato, McCormack, and scores of others—a majority of all the greatest singers of all the world.

Other Columbia models \$17.50, \$35, \$50, \$100, \$150, \$200.

Columbia Phonograph Co., Gen'l. Box 305, Tribune Bldg., New York
London: Earlsfield, S. W.

Creators of the Talking-machine Industry. Pioneers and leaders in the Talking-machine art. Owners of the fundamental patents. Largest manufacturers of Talking-machines in the world. Dealers wanted. Exclusive selling rights granted where we are not actively represented.

Columbia Phonograph Company

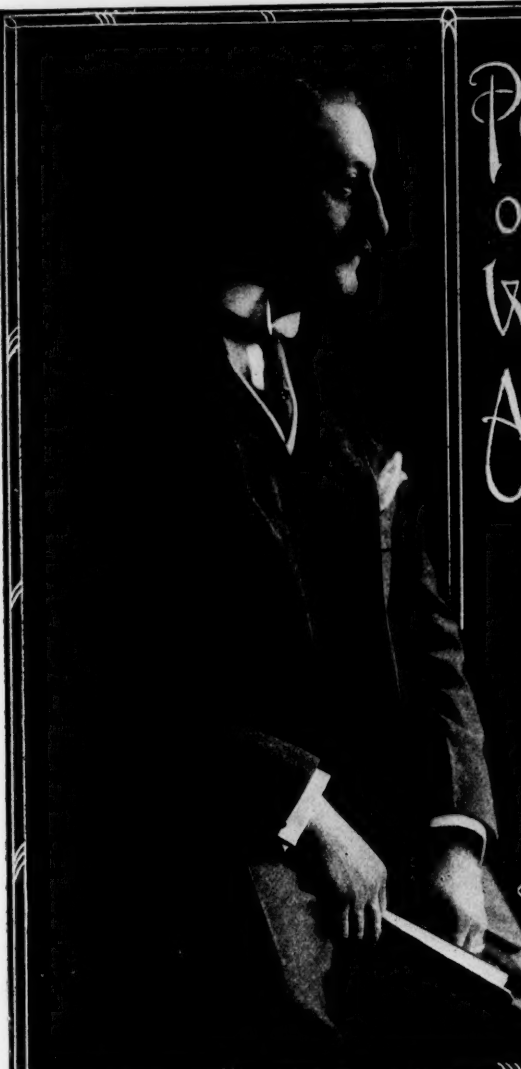
Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

SMITH'S MAGAZINE


VOLUME 14

NOVEMBER, 1911

NUMBER 2



Portraits
of
Well-known
Actors



JOHN DREW
IN "A SINGLE MAN"

© PHOTO - MOFFETT - CHI.

V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1

XUM

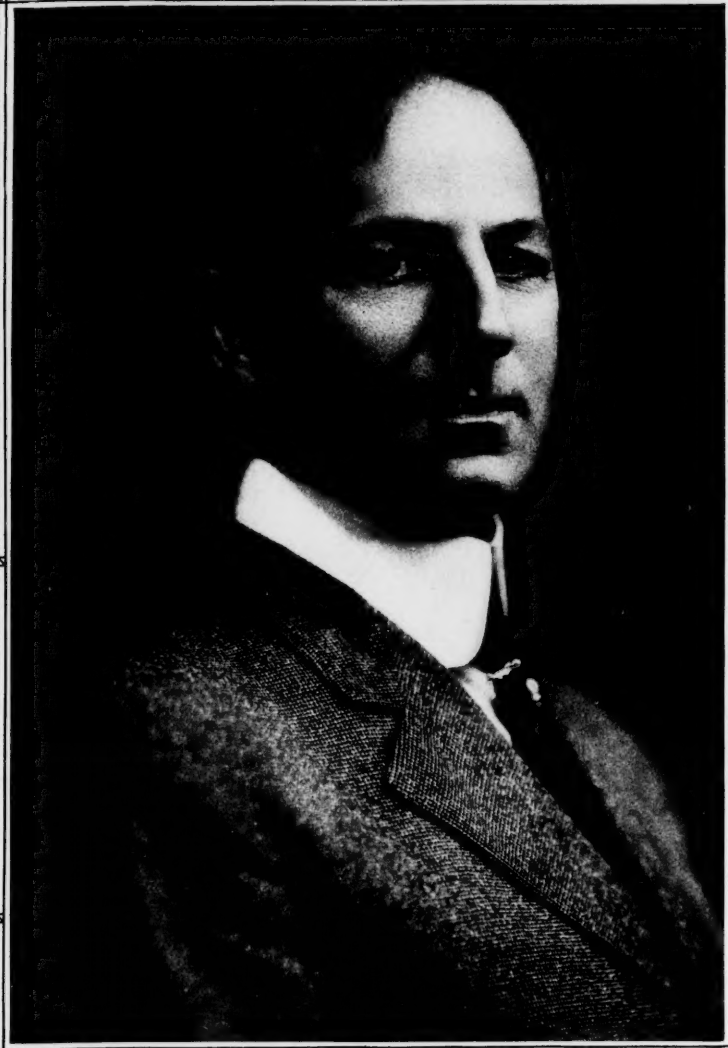


Photo by Sarony, N. Y.

FRANCIS WILSON
In "The Bachelor's Baby"

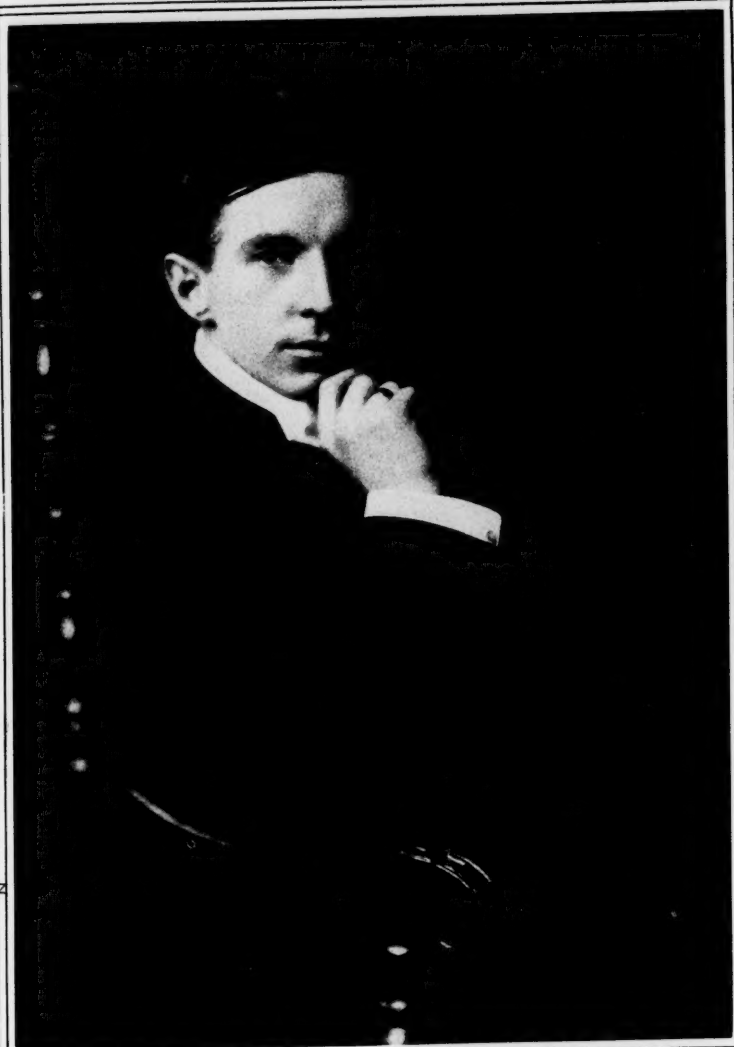


Photo by Moffett, Chicago

WILLIAM T. HODGE
In "The Man from Home"



V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1

XUM

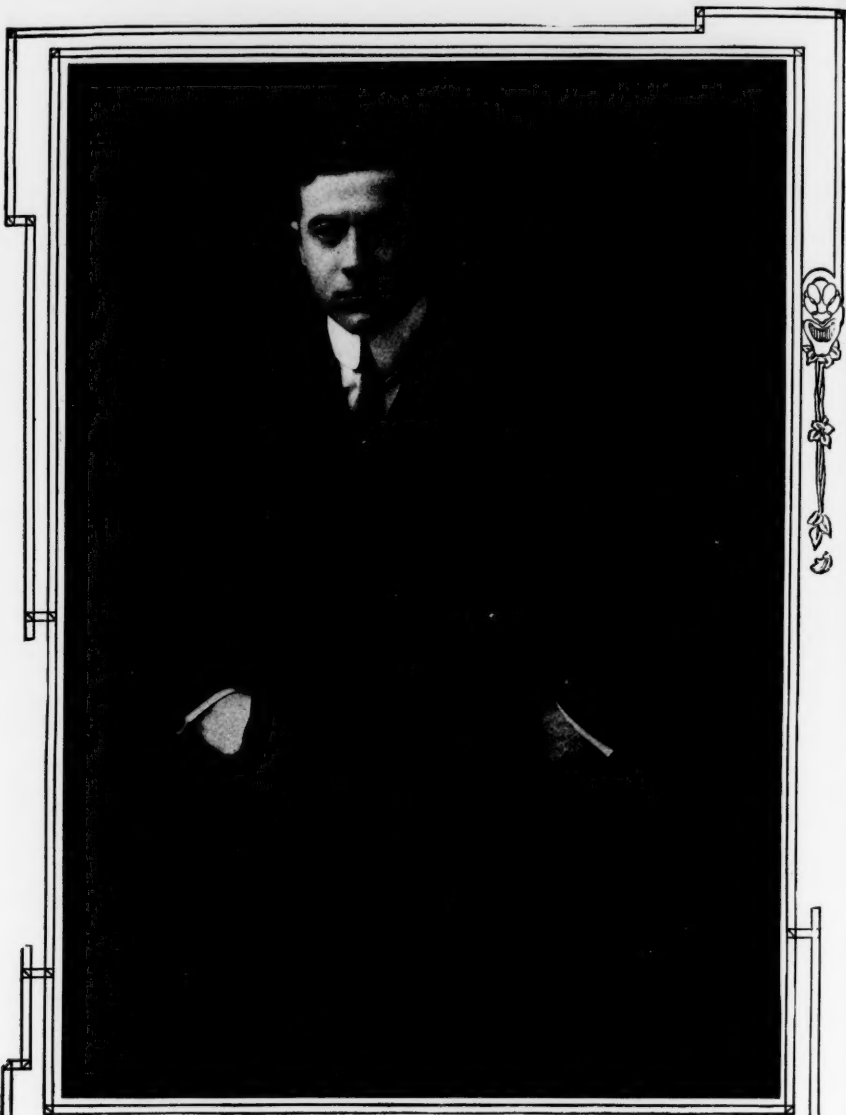


Photo by Moffett, Chicago

EUGENE O'BRIEN
A Western favorite

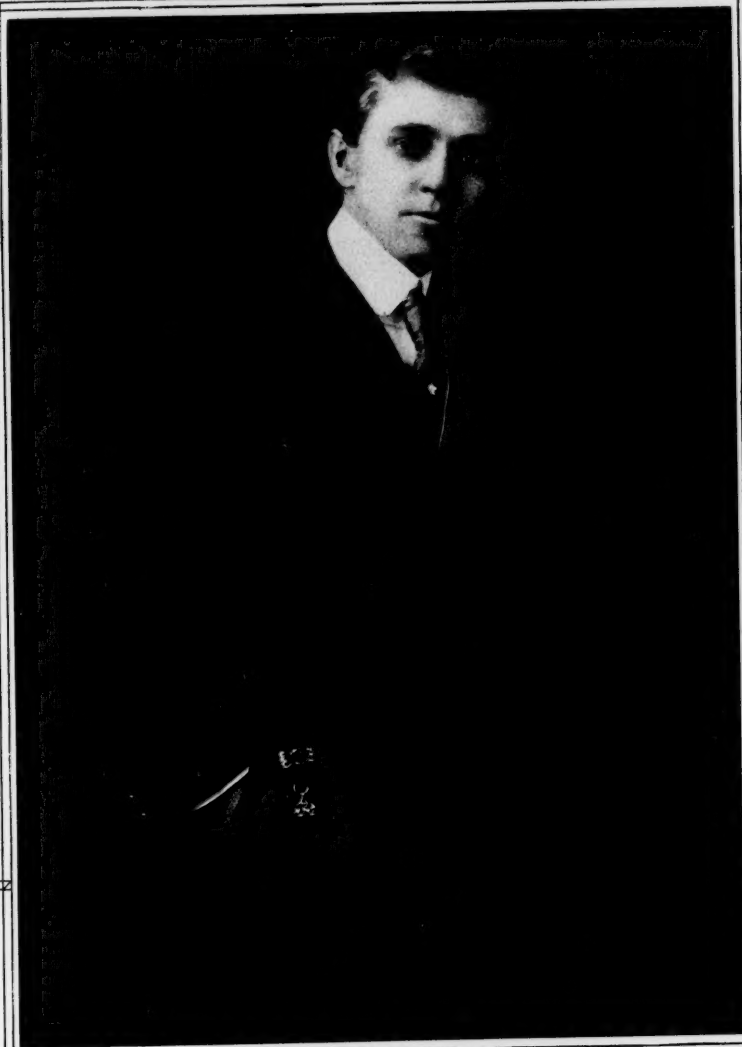
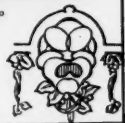


Photo by Moffett, Chicago

WALKER WHITESIDE
A Liebler & Co. star, to appear in a new play



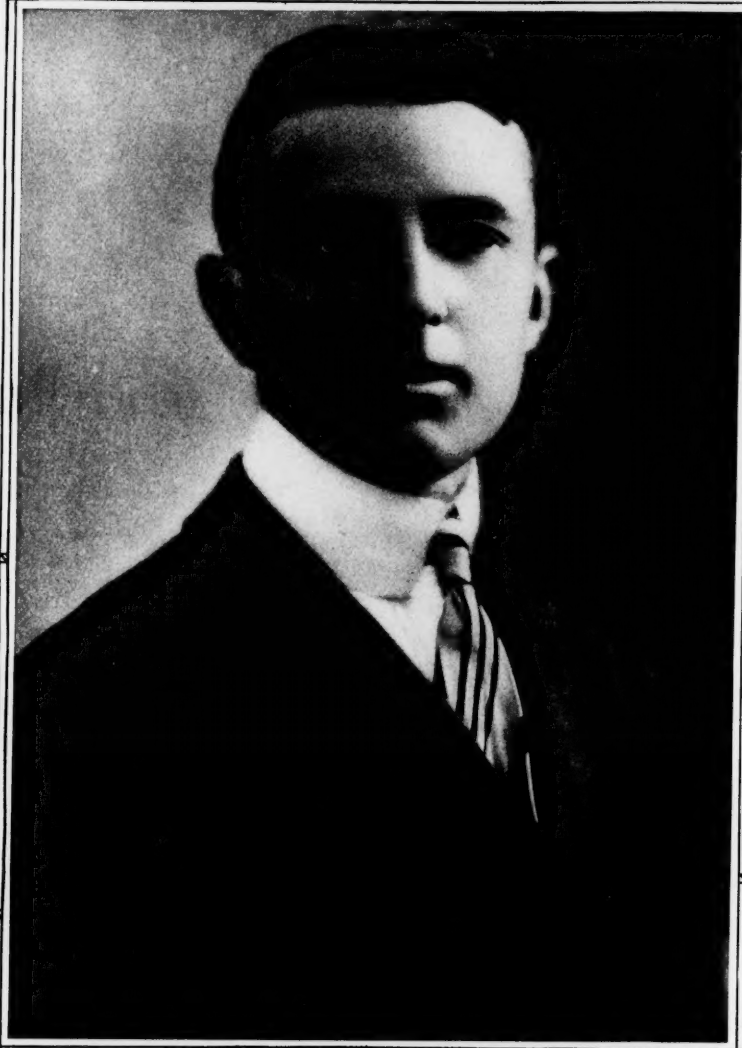


Photo by Sarony, N. Y.



A. E. MATTHEWS
Under management of Charles Frohman

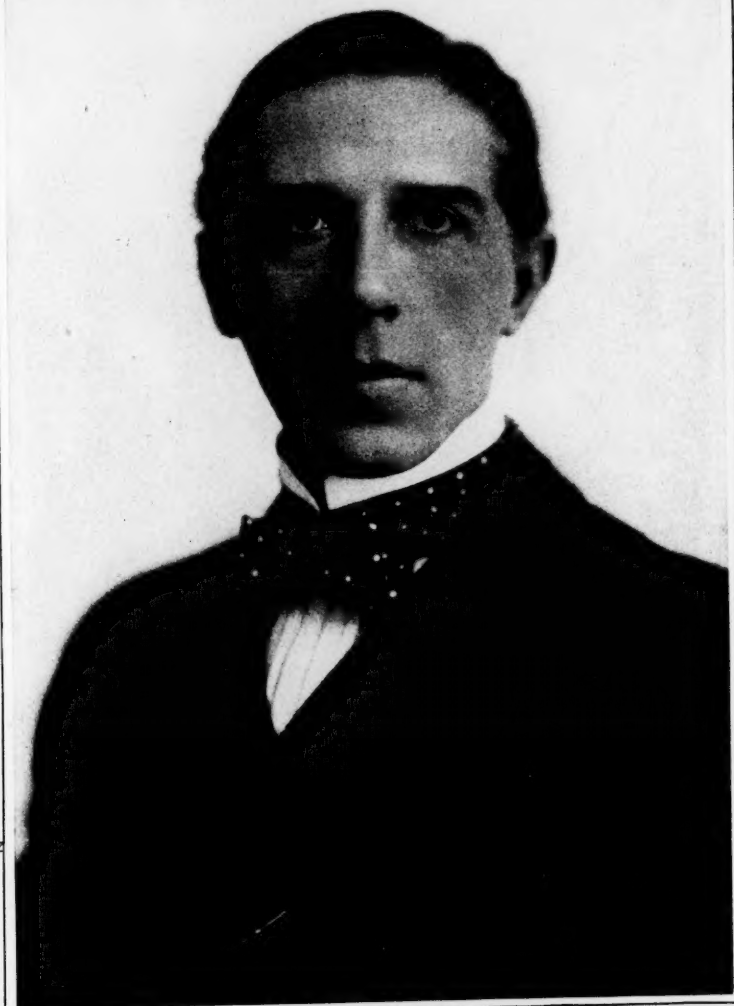
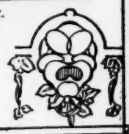


Photo by Gurney, N. Y.

JULIAN ROYCE
A favorite leading man



V
1
4
2
N
O
V
1
1
XUM



Photo by White, N. Y.



PAUL EVERTON
In "The Gamblers" (Western company)



Photo by Watson, Chicago

FREDERICK TRUESDALE

A prominent leading man who will appear in a new comedy



V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1
XUM



Photo by Matzema, Chicago

GEORGE NASH
Last season in "The Gamblers." To appear in a new play

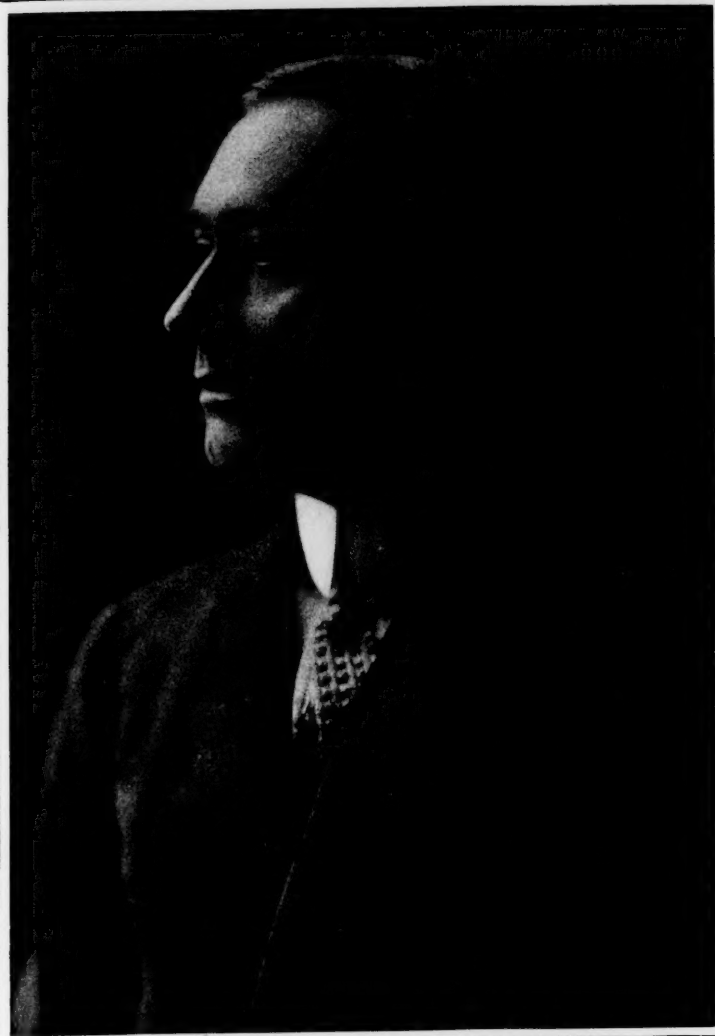


Photo by Muffett, Chicago

EMMETT CORRIGAN
In "The Deep Purple"



V
1
4
1
2

N
O
V

1
1

XU



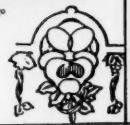
Photo by Matsena, Chicago

JOHN WESLEY
A young actor of great promise



Photo by Mottet, Chicago

HENRY WOODRUFF
A favorite of many seasons



V
1
4
2
N
O
V
1
1
XUM

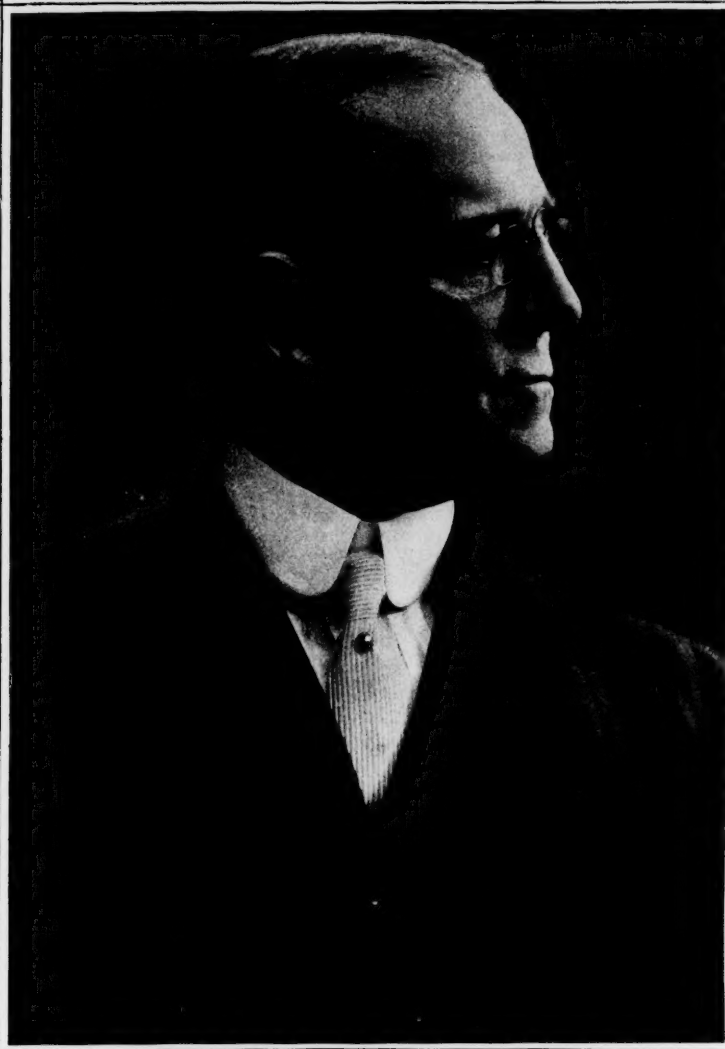


Photo by Sarony, N. Y.

WILLIAM H. CRANE
To appear in a new play



Photo by Moffett, Chicago

WILLIAM GILLETTE
In repertoire of his own plays



V
1
4
1
2

N
O
V

1
1

XUM



Photo by Moffet, Chicago

RICHARD BENNETT

Last season in "The Deep Purple." Will appear in a new play



THE FIGHTING DOCTOR

By

Helen R. Martin

Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "The Crossways," "When Half-Gods Go," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

CHAPTER I.

DOCTOR THORPE was taking a hasty dinner before his evening office hour, which of late had actually begun to be rather filled with patients, though it was a long, hard struggle which the young physician was having among the rural Pennsylvania Dutch to overcome their prejudice against the modern method of dispensing with drugs in favor of sanitary living, not to mention the much deeper prejudice against a doctor who was "a city stranger," and who "did not mind to his own business," but went about trying to stir up the whole sleepy township with his howl for good roads and no graft; also the rumor—spread abroad for the most part by his prying and loquacious, albeit loyal, house-keeper—of his "tony ways" and other eccentricities, such as his insisting upon his meals being served in the dining room instead of the kitchen; his daily—not weekly—baths; his having the parlor shutters open on week days as well as Sundays; his motor runabout; his sleeping on a cot on the roof of the porch; these and other madnesses had served to intensify the local prejudice against "a townner."

The square brick house in which the doctor lived stood twenty feet back

from the country roadside, and was pleasantly surrounded by large, beautiful old trees. The appointments of the few rooms which he used, the good pictures, the books, proclaimed him a man of such inheritance and tastes as to be an exotic in Daniel Webster Township. Indeed, one of the many things which worked against his success here was that subtle atmosphere, in his general tone and bearing, of a man of culture and breeding; naturally, an unfamiliar type in Webster.

The few who employed his services were those who failed to be helped by the powwow doctor and the township quack. These, however, were a steadily increasing number.

It had been a strenuous day for the doctor. In fact, he had on this day been tried before the Lebanon County Court to answer charges brought against him by the farmers of Webster Township for "damaging" their roads by using a road drag to clear away the mud that he might run his infernal automobile, which frightened their horses and endangered their lives.

The jury, however—composed of town people, not farmers, and therefore a bit more open-minded—having taken a look at the doctor's photographs of the roads before and after the drag had gone over them, and a few

of the automobilists on the jury sympathizing with his statement that before using the drag he had "stuck in the mud, eaten mud, been clothed in mud, dreamed of mud," his acquittal had come as a quick and easy victory, to the confounding of his prosecutors who had supposed that their own triumph was a foregone conclusion.

This supposition on their part argued a colossal ignorance as to the sort of man they were dealing with, though his stubborn jaw and stocky build, his countenance of mingled sternness and good humor, the sharpness of his black eyes, gave an impression, at sight, of a personality strong enough to meet, with an unruffled front, almost any sort of emergency.

Indeed, difficulties were, to a temperament like his, only a stimulus to his energies, and the unexpected antagonism he had met in this community, into which he had dropped, upon the death of the former doctor, had served to develop all his fighting powers.

"And now, Susan, the trial being over," he cheerfully remarked to his housekeeper, a stout, comfortable-looking woman of middle age, who waited upon him at his dinner, "the next thing is to get myself elected to the board of road supervisors, and make things hum! Once I'm a road supervisor, madam, automobiles, wagons, and carriages won't stick in the mud in Webster Township! And there'll be no more graft! Another glass of water, please, Susan. I wish *you* had a vote to give me! I'm going to have a tough fight of it, to convert enough of my enemies to vote me into the board!"

"Ach, doctor, now you ain't that dumb as to think you could ever *make* it if you run fur superwisor, are you? Why, there'd be twenty woters agin' you to one that would be fur you!"

The doctor's relations with his housekeeper were not, as might appear, exceedingly democratic; on the contrary, they were absolutely autocratic; for, though theoretically inclined to Socialism, he recognized that in this community he could keep no servant whom he did not treat as his superior. What

was more, he found it a bit lonesome living among enemies, and Susan, being condescendingly friendly, sometimes served as a safety valve for his overcharged feelings.

"To be sure," she went on, "if the women could vote, you'd get in; fur all of 'em that had single daughters would give *you* a wote, you not bein' promised to no one; leastways, not so far as I know," she added insinuatingly, curiosity fairly radiating from her. She paused expectantly, but the doctor not rising to her bait, she hastily continued: "And you bein' so well fixed, with a plenty to live on, even if you ain't got much practice——"

"Practice, Susan? I've heard my office bell tinkle three times in the last ten minutes. Three patients waiting in there for me, and you say I haven't a flourishing practice?"

"One of them three," explained Susan, whose interest in the doctor's affairs was equaled only by her zeal in disseminating her knowledge of them, "is Lizzie Yutzy come to jew you down on the big bill you sent her. The other one is Meely Swartzentraber that says if you *won't* give her a big bottle of soothing drops fur her baby, she'll take him to Doc Weitzel into Lebanon yet! And the third——"

"Well? The third?"

Susan lowered her voice. "It's that there Dietz girl that's in trouble!"

"Um—m!"

"Yes, sir."

"None of it very lucrative or promising, Susan, to be sure."

"You see," said Susan, "when you've went and got the political boss, Mike Goodman, so agin' you that he even keeps *patients* off of you, what kin you expect?"

"Mike has no cause to love me!" the doctor admitted. "Because my fight for good roads is, in time, going to loosen his grip on the county treasury. That's why he told the court to-day that I was 'a dangerous nuisance.' I am that—to a grafter like Mike!"

"To be sure, Mike, he's a politician, but I never conceited he wasn't per-

feckly honest, doctor," said Susan, much shocked.

"An honest politician, Susan? Well, the thing's not impossible, perhaps. Some corn, please. Thank you. But it's rare, Susan—da—divinely rare, I should say."

"You ought to have heard Mike jaw me here last week fur comin' to house-keep fur you, doctor! The old sour ball talked that ugly to me, you'd have thought he was my own husband yet, instead of only a neighbor man!"

"Your experiences in husbands, Susan!" said the doctor, shaking his head.

"I certainly have had my experiences with 'em!" sighed Susan. "Two yet! And now they want to call me the Merry Widdah!"

"You'll be the Merry Coon if you marry that Johnny that's trying to make up to you. You'd better warn John Kuhn that if he tries to take my good housekeeper from me, I'll run my car over him. You see, I'm a believer in the survival of the fit, and it is fitter that Kuhn should die than that I should starve—and leave Webster Township to its bad roads, bad habits, and bad health."

"You needn't worry; I tole John Kuhn I'd had enough of endowin' husbands with my worldly goods, and Roosevelt hisself couldn't have me if I knowed he wouldn't be no good purvider. 'It ain't my fault,' John says. 'I was always unlucky.' But I tole him it ain't luck, it's management. 'Well,' he says, 'ain't a feller lucky if the Lord gives him management?'"

"John is a philosopher."

"That may be," returned Susan disparagingly, "but bein' a phil-whatever don't make a man a good purvider. No, I tole John, and I tole Mike Goodman, too, what a pleasant cooker I made you, and how well you suited me, too. So here I stay; anyways, till you get married a'ready!"

"No hope of Kuhn voting for me, then!"

"But," cried Susan, "he *has* to, to keep on the right side of me! Say, doctor, have you saw Mike's stylish niece,

Mollie Graeff, that he raised?" she suddenly demanded irrelevantly. "She's just home from Kutztown Normal, and now that she's got all that elegant education, she wants to be so much, no one 'round here's good enough fur her. Ezra Kuntz, he used to run with her, but no, he ain't tony enough no more. Mind you, what she makes 'em do up at her Uncle Mike's? What Mike and his wife never done since they was born a'ready? Eat in the dining room! Why, she wants to be as tony as you yet! Like as if she was always raised in town! No eatin' in the kitchen fur her, now she's got such a die-ploma or what. And a napkin she must have, comp'ny or no comp'ny—*her*! They say she tried to work Mike fur such a bathroom—yes, like the one you put in upstairs here, but there Mike he was fur stoppin'. That, he says, he don't do, die-ploma or no die-ploma! *Ack*, but it got her proud, goin' to Kutztown Normal!"

"A little learning and a little gentility are very dangerous things, Susan."

"And they say she's so fancy. Six shirt waists she had in the wash last week, Sallie Spatz tole me. It wonders me that her aunt and uncle will put up with it."

"Susan, I fear this conversation savors of gossip."

"Gossip! Me, I never gossip, doctor. You're the first yet that ever said I gossiped. Did you hear yet," she resumed, "that at the school-board meetin' last night they elected her teacher fur next term?"

"Mike Goodman's niece?" asked the doctor, frowning. "A pity! It's bad blood, the Goodman breed, and we want to get rid of its influence in this township. I'm sorry she got the school."

"It's a pity, too—ain't it?—to educate a girl so as she is too good fur all the fellahs. She'll be an old maid if she don't make herself more common. *Have* you saw her yet, doctor?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"*Ach*, you'd know it if you had saw her; she looks as different from the folks around here as you do yet."

"Well, well, when I've done my work



"Three patients waiting in there for me, and you say I haven't a flourishing practice?"

on the supervisors' board, I'll resign and get myself elected to the school board—and give them a *good* teacher."

Susan shook her head discouragingly.

"Mike Goodman ain't never a-goin' to leave you get on no board of *no* kind 'round here, doctor; you might know that, smart as *you* are!"

"You watch me, Susan. Mike's official days—and his niece's, too, for that matter, with her little airs, poor girl—are numbered."

"You don't know these here Dutch, doctor. They're used to doin' what Mike says, and they're *sot* people."

"*Sot!* The pyramids are wabbly beside them. All the same, Susan, you watch me."

"Then all I got to say, you or Mike—

one of yous two—is got to die."

"Just so, Susan."

"It would be enough better fur your practice, doctor, if you left politics be. Here's your pie."

"Thank you. Politics? I'm not a politician, Susan, I'm a doctor. But before we can make this community physically wholesome, we've got to clean it up morally. It's mud I'm fighting, the mud in the roads and the mud in the community's *life*. I won out to-day. I'll win again. The Goodman breed must *go!* You'll live to see it. A finger bowl, please."

"A *whatever?*"

"Ah, I was wandering in my mind. Excuse me. I'll break it to you when you are more used to me. Meantime I'll——"

He dipped his fingers into his glass of water, wiped them, and rose to go into his office.

CHAPTER II.

The mother who had come for "a big bottle of drops" for her baby, after giving the doctor a fifteen minutes' discourse on the infant's constitution, protested volubly against his verdict that the child needed no medicine.

"But, doctor," she reasoned, "he lays and screams so, I can't get his face washed off or his hair brushed out."

"Lucky for him! A pretty looking thing he'd be with his face off and his hair out! Stop pouring carloads of drugs into him and feeding him sauerkraut and sausage; keep him out of doors instead of in a darkened room, and——"

"Out door in such chilly weather, doctor! And when he's sick yet!"

"Keep him out of doors in the sun several hours a day, and he won't need drops to make him sleep. There's nothing the matter with him but drops, bad diet, and want of fresh air and sun. I have no medicine for you, mother."

The woman rose reluctantly.

"Well, anyhow, then I don't owe you nothin'. I'll go to Doc Weitzel fur medicine. He don't charge as much as you, anyhow, fur a office call."

"Fifty cents, Mrs. Swartzentraber, for my time and advice, which would be worth fifty dollars to you if you would follow it."

"Fifty cents fur advisin' me to starve and freeze my baby, and not give him no medicine when he's sick! I never heard of a doctor chargin' sosomepin when he don't give no medicine."

"You hear of one now," smiled the doctor, who had learned in Webster Township to be tough-skinned in exacting his dues. He had never yet received a dollar of payment for his services that had not been contested.

After a little further protest on the woman's part, with quiet insistence—as a matter of principle—on his, she paid her fee, and departed.

Next came the girl who was "in trouble," "Jen" Dietz, the township black sheep; a menace to all the youths of the countryside capable of being tempted by such as she. She lived "back in the mountain," and prowled at sundown from village to hamlet for her prey.

With loud lament she insisted, as the doctor rose to his medicine closet after hearing about her ailments, that she "did not know how it had happened."

"But where were *you*?" he asked, as he poured a liquid into a bottle of white pellets. "Take six of these every hour when you are sick. And, Jenny, when you are over this, if I ever see you on the streets after dark, I shall have you sent where you can't do any harm. Do you understand? I'm the doctor that wants to get rid of mud in Webster Township. Here's your medicine. No

charge. Use the money for the poor baby. Good night!"

A little seven-year-old girl from a near-by farm was the next patient.

"Any one ill at home, Sally?" the doctor asked, as he drew her into his consulting office.

"No, sir. But me I came to ask fur a baby fur us. Aunt Emmy she says you got hern fur her fur fifteen dollars. Pop, he couldn't pay that high, but Aunt Emmy's baby is so big and fat; a thinner, cheaper one would do us. Then we could fatten it up till we had it oncet. Do you have 'em cheaper?"

"Only black ones, Sally, I'm sorry to say. I'm clean out of cheap white ones. I could give you a black one now for—"

"Ach, no, sir! Mom, she wouldn't do it to leave me have no colored baby!"

She looked up at him wistfully, a suspicion of tears in her disappointed eyes.

"You little woman girl!" He gently patted her cheek. "Never mind, my dear, you'll have what you want some day. Meantime—hold your hands."

He piled them full of big, pink candy pellets, and she went away partially consoled.

Then came Mrs. Lizzie Yutzy, a neat little elderly woman, to protest, in a steady stream of monotonous argument, against her bill.

The doctor, after listening patiently for a few minutes, tried, mildly, to stem the tide of words, but, though not swift, she was sure, and neither to be diverted nor checked.

"Six dollars fur six wisits yet! A dollar a wisit! Ach, that's too much! Doc Weitzel has to come funder'n you, and he gets only seventy-five cents a wisit, and *then* docks off some when a body comes to pay; and here you want a dollar a wisit! And you say you don't dock none when the bill's paid. It'll go agin' you out here, doctor. All the doctors that ever lived 'round here docks off some when a body comes to pay. But you—"

"Wait!" he broke in. "Let me ask you something. Did I help you?"

"Well," she reluctantly admitted, "not as much as I had conceited you would."

"But I helped you?"

"Well, I ain't sure it was you cured me. I think it was the burnt chicken soup done it."

"The burnt chicken soup?"

"It's the best cure, anyhow, fur erysipelas. You hold a chicken, with its feathers on over the fire till it's burnt black; then throw it in a pot of water, and boil it, and the soup in the pot you eat that, and it cures your erysipelas."

"Why did you send for me, then?"

"I was sufferin' so! And mister he had afraid fur me. But I guess it was the burnt-chicken soup cured me. And now you want six dollars off of me! Won't you take seventy-five cents a visit? Seventy-five is all Doc Weitzel charges, and it's enough, goodness knows!"

"Not enough for me."

"You won't come down to seventy-five cents per?"

"No 'seventy-five cents per' for me, Mrs. Yutzy. One dollar a visit."

"And nothin' docked off?"

"And nothing docked."

"Well, doctor, if you ain't!"

"I'll tell you what, Mrs. Yutzy—you don't owe me anything."

"What do you say?"

"Give me your bill. I'll receipt it—if you feel you can't afford to pay it."

She drew back.

"No. Us we *pay* our bills, me and mister. It ain't that I don't want fur to pay. I'm a honest person. Only I want you to dock off some. Doc Weitzel, he always docks off, and, anyhow, he don't charge more'n——"

"I never dock. I'll *give* you the six dollars. You need not pay it."

"No, that ain't settlin' this thing to satisfaction. If you'll take four or four-fifty, then I'll call it settled to satisfaction, and——"

"I really have not time to talk any more about it, Mrs. Yutzy."

He rose, and took up his hat and medicine case.

"I have a call to make to-night."

She continued to parley, and not until

he had walked to the door did she most unwillingly hand over the six dollars. He was obliged, then, to return to his desk and give her a receipt. But she went on talking and arguing all the way out to the gate.

"She'll keep her 'mister' awake all night talking about it," grinned the doctor, as his motor car whizzed him over the darkening roads past scattered farmhouses and an occasional country store, to his destination, two miles away.

As he passed the comfortable home of his arch-enemy, Mike Goodman, he caught a momentary glimpse, in the front parlor, of a fair head bowed over a book by the lamp on the center table.

"The niece! Uses the parlor on week days. Against all precedent! How does she make them let her do it? Mike works the voters of the township, and she works Mike, it seems. Yes, when I'm through with this roads business, I must get myself on the school board. We must have the right sort of a teacher here. None of that Goodman breed!"

The novelty of his life in this Pennsylvania Dutch district was a constant exhilaration to Doctor Thorpe. He wrote to an old college friend:

To think of *me*, who was ever suspicious of the reformer's rôle, and who claimed that self-righteousness must be nine-tenths of his make-up, out here playing the part myself! It was their damnably muddy roads that started me, and landed me, by the devious paths of local political graft, upon the truth that a doctor's work in a community, to be effective, has got to begin with the *soul* of that community. Blamed if it doesn't sound like Christian Science and the Emanuel Movement! It was *mud* that taught me that spiritual fact. Well, at all events, I assure you that I'm having lots of fun out of it. There's only one thing—I get a bit lonesome sometimes, and would give a good deal for a talk now and then over a pipe with you or any one else, man or woman, who spake with the tongue of my own world.

CHAPTER III.

Mike Goodman, county politician and proprietor of a flour mill, the most prosperous inhabitant of the township, walked into the dining room, where his wife was removing the chenille cover

from the table to lay the cloth for supper.

The room, in addition to the "dining-room suit," contained a large, round stove called "The Monarch," a hair-cloth sofa, two rocking-chairs, and a sewing machine. Its spotless cleanliness and cozy warmth on this chill autumn evening gave it an air of home-like comfort that was very grateful.

"Well, well!" Mike crowed, rubbing his hands together with smug satisfaction, as he walked about between The Monarch and the table. "We've got him fixed good! *Him* elected to the roads supervisors board! He won't git a dozen votes in this here whole township!"

Externally Mike suggested so adequately what he was mentally and morally, that had he been called upon to act the part in a play, no "make-up" would have been necessary. A bulldog scowl, with the cunning of a cat, stamped his features; the forward push of his fat, round head, the sinuous movements of his body, the ingratiating smirk that was his effort at smiling playfulness, were the marks set upon him and deepened by his career as unscrupulous political boss and by secret social dissipation. Nevertheless Mike was superintendent of the Sunday school, his neighbors esteemed him as a man of property and influence, and as a useful citizen of the republic, and his wife thought him a good husband.

"Is it Doctor Thorpe you mean, Mike?" Mrs. Goodman quite superfluously inquired in her characteristically even and monotonous tone, her colorless personality manifest in every relaxed line of her limp, stout form. It would have been a close observer who would have detected in that mild, sleek countenance the faintly cruel obstinacy of the too-sweet mouth.

"Who *would* I mean?" Mike growled impatiently. "Don't be so dumb!"

His wife, looking meekly apologetic, continued her work of setting the table.

"I've been half over the township this after," he said, as he removed his hat and coat, "and not a man I talked to but passed me his promise he

wouldn't wote fur Doctor Thorpe next Thursday. 'A crank like him,' they says, 'that half the time won't give medicine when you're willin' to pay fur it; tells folks to h'ist the windahs in a room where a feller's layin' with peenoomony; says folks ought to wash all over in *wintertime*—yes, even babies yet! And that every one's house ought to be throwed open and aired good oncet a day, anyhow!' Yes, Weesy, such dumn things like that he tells folks to do, and then thinks this here township's goin' to elect him road supervisor! Ain't it comic?"

"But mind you the dust that blows in when you open up." Mrs. Goodman feebly argued against the doctor's heresies. "And every day yet! *Ach*, my soul! It looks, Mike," she said, with cunning suspicion, "like as if he wanted fur to get folks to do things that would make 'em sick, so's he'd have to go tend 'em. Mebby that's the way he's tryin' to work up a practice ain't? *Don't* it look that way?"

"By gum, Weesy, you've hit it!" Mike exclaimed excitedly. "That's the best side-winder yet fur this here campaign! Gosh, won't I work it fur all there is in it! Weesy, you're a politician!"

Weesy—her name was Louisa—looked mildly flattered, though puzzled.

"But what do you mean, Mike?"

"I'll show up his slick tricks—adwisin' folks to expose their constitootions so's he kin git a practice—which he *can't* git by honest methods. See? To be sure, even if I didn't bother workin' agin' him, he wouldn't git no wotes to speak of, so mad he's got the farmers with his old road drag and his claimin' to know so much more about our roads than us that's lived here all our lives. And," he added derisively, "with hardly a friend to his name and only about a week till election day, here he's goin' about sayin' he has as good as got the election *a'ready*. Gosh, won't we have the laugh on him when they returns comes in next Tuesday a week? It'll be the best fun I seen this good while back a'ready."

And Mike guffawed as he went out

to the kitchen to wash at the sink. In a few moments he returned, rubbing his head and face with a towel.

"Where's Mollie? Why ain't she helpin' you with the supper? She's home from her school, ain't she?"

"Yes, this good while a'ready. She's in the parlor settin'."

"In the parlor settin'! Huh! I'll tend to *that*, you bet you!"

He strode across the room, jerked open a door, and stood glowering upon the occupant of the room beyond.

"Hello, hello, what's this, what's this? Settin' down to read a book and your Aunt Weesy gettin' supper!"

The girl seated by the window looked up from her book, her eyes absent, unseeing, or, rather, they had a look of being turned inward with an earnestness of attention that left her blind to what was about her.

"Well?" demanded Mike roughly.

"Yes? What, uncle?"

"Are you deaf or what? I sayerd your Aunt Weesy's gettin' supper and you're settin' here readin'."

"If Aunt Louisa could study this old civil government for me, I'd gladly get the supper for her. Of all unexciting things in earth, heaven, or hell, a public-school textbook on 'civil government' is the limit!" She vindictively pitched the book across the room into a corner, and sent her slipper flying off her foot after it. "Getting supper would be mad dissipation compared to the mental anguish of imbibing such dust as that! To think of being obliged to waste one's fair young life over that, when there are such things to read as Keats' poetry and George Eliot's novels! If I've got to teach that civil government, I'll resign, and turn politician or Evangelist, whichever pays best."

Her uncle roared with laughing as he strode across the room to her side and roughly attempted to caress her, but she deftly eluded that by gliding from under his arm to go after her slipper, and he was not unmindful of her shrinking from his touch.

Never in all her heart-hungry childhood had he laid a hand upon her ex-

cept in tyranny. It was only when the overworked and scrawny girl bloomed out unexpectedly into exquisite maidenhood that his wife's niece became to him an object of such desire as to make him willing even to hinder her in the heavy work he demanded of her, to be held on his knee while he played with her hair, patted her shapely shoulders, kissed her delicate fair neck. To the girl's untutored intuition, this belated "affection" grew to be a torture so keen that to avoid it she developed a diplomacy which served her well in her later needs and struggles.

Just now, her uncle resented, as always, her eluding him.

"Go 'long now, and help your Aunt Weesy!" he gruffly commanded.

"Help Aunt Louisa?" she asked, as she sat on the floor to tie her slipper. "I understand that I am to pay board here, Uncle Mike, now that I am teaching."

"To be sure you're to pay board. The little bit of work you kin do out of school hours wouldn't pay fur keepin' you."

"But if I pay board, I do no house-work."

"Then I charge you more board yet!" he angrily exclaimed.

"I can get board at the hotel for what I have agreed to pay you, and the hotel people won't ask me to get the supper."

"The hotel keepsers ain't your own aunt and uncle. Don't you owe no *duties* to them that raised you up since you was born a'ready? And you want-in' your Aunt Weesy to be a slave fur you and set your meals in the dining room yet, and you not turn your hand to help—you, her own niece!"

"No need for any sentiment on the score of our relationship, Uncle Mike," she answered, with unruffled good humor, "since it has always been a strictly pay-for-what-you-get arrangement between us, you know—as far back as I can remember; with the advantage always to your account; you and Aunt Louisa took good care of that, uncle."

"That's actin' like a daughter—ain't?"

—to them that raised you?" he reiterated his argument.

"Uncle Mike," she replied very quietly, "what one thing have you or Aunt Louisa ever done for me for which you have not charged me? For instance, to-day"—she suddenly smiled—"Aunt Louisa made me give her ten cents for the use of her sewing machine for a quarter of an hour, and forty cents for letting me drive to town with her in the buggy. I could have gone and come in the stage for twenty-five cents. So you see if I'm to be treated strictly as a boarder, I must live up to it. I'm perfectly willing to. I'll pay you and Aunt Louisa for everything you give me. But I'll charge you for what I give you, for I am poor and you are rich; a little richer than you would be if I had not always worked for you, and if," she added, rising from the floor, the steady level of her gaze making his own shift and waver, "you had not, unfortunately for me, been the guardian of my small inheritance."

"You're a little feist, that's what you are!" she snapped at her. "You always was!"

"The one thing that you and Aunt Louisa must understand is that I don't mean any longer to be imposed upon—or bullied."

"Ach!" he growled. But his wife's voice calling them both to supper put an end to their discussion.

The report of Mollie Graeff's re-



The girl seated by the window looked up from her book, her eyes absent, unseeing.

forms in the customs of her uncle's household had been greatly exaggerated, for she had been too wise to attempt to accomplish more than what she had come to deem a few essentials. It was only the greed of her aunt for the exorbitant board she paid that enabled the girl to exact the few comforts she had, for Mrs. Mike Goodman was, even in this Pennsylvania Dutch neighborhood, notorious for being "near."

But the pewter castor in the center of the supper table, the turned-down plates and goblets, the pie which must appear at every meal of a Pennsylvania

Dutch family, her uncle in his shirt sleeves putting his own knife into the butter—these and innumerable other things which tried Mollie, she knew could never be changed.

"Talkin' about manners," Mike discoursed while he ate, "in there at the doctor's trial last week, when we all went to the American House fur dinner, I seen that the doctor—that wants to be so much, mind you—acted so dumm with his napkin—they served napkins—and doctor, he didn't seem to know what to do with hisn, like as if he wasn't used to 'em; instead of tuckin' it at the end of his chin, didn't he lay it acrost his legs, mind you!"

"But here's Mollie does the same," said her aunt; "her that wants to be so tony, too."

"Too tony to help along with the extry work she makes," muttered Mike. "Well," he added, "Susan Schnabel, now that she housekeeps fur the doctor, she gives it out that his table manners beats anything *she* ever seen! Mind you, he makes her fetch in such a little glass wash bowl *to the table* after he's through eating all; not even as big, Susan says, as a soup plate yet. No soap nor towel with it, just clear water; and he don't rightly *wash*; just sticks in his fist, and dries 'em off with a napkin. Yes, after every meal, that he must have! What do we want of such dood ways out here?" demanded Mike indignantly. "Say, Mollie!"

"Well, Uncle Mike?"

"It's put out that he's tryin' to git on the school board to fill out the unexpired term of John Holzapple that resigned last week, so's he kin put *you* off your job! Holzapple's term expires just about the time the new supervisor takes his office. Susan Schnabel, she's give it out that he says he's a-goin' to fight the mud in this here township, moral and physical, till it's a clean enough place to live in, and that he don't want none of 'that bad Goodman breed' teachin' in our school! What do you think of that, heh? I'll lick that feller if he don't watch out!"

"Oh!" Mollie turned a pale and startled face to her uncle. "But why," she

said breathlessly, "should he want to persecute *me*? Oh! I've worked so hard, so awfully *hard* to get this school! I am so——"

"Yi, yi, yi!" her uncle checked her. "*He* can't do you nothin'. He'll no more be appointed to the school board than he will git elected to the road supervisors' board."

"But you were sure he was going to lose his case in court last week, and he won!" Mollie almost wailed.

"That's somepin different again. That there jury was made up of a lot of damned dumb towners that couldn't see through *nothin'*."

"But he seems to be a man of such ferocious energy and determination! And I suppose he does hate you, Uncle Mike."

"He does that, all right," laughed Mike, his mouth full of fried potato.

"What a contemptible object he must be to want to wreak his wrath against you upon a defenseless girl!"

"Yes, ain't?" nodded Mike.

"I only hope he *will* be defeated; at least until I've saved enough here to get to college."

"College yet!" sneered Mike. "And you a female!"

"I never conceited I was raisin' her to be such a high flyer!" Mrs. Goodman shook her head dolefully.

"Only suppose," Mollie suddenly suggested, looking comically tragic, "if Doctor Thorpe got on the school board and should come to the school some day to hear me teach civil government! Oh! He'd have *reason* to put me out—for what I don't know about the subject."

"I guess you know enough to teach anybody 'round these here parts," her uncle consoled her.

"Not enough civil government, Uncle Mike." She sighed as she glanced at her watch. "Your news has taken away my appetite, so I might as well go in and tackle the old thing again."

"*Ach*, Mollie," her aunt reproved her, "I tole you often a'ready not to be always takin' your gold watch in and out, it wears it so."

"Don't you go settin' down to your

book before the supper dishes is through all," her uncle commanded her.

"Yes, I guess, anyhow, not," added her aunt.

"If my being here really does make too much work for you, Aunt Louisa, I can go to the hotel, or Uncle Mike can get a maid."

"You mean you won't do it to help along?"

"Certainly I'll help—for my board, or for part of it."

"No," said her aunt, "if it comes to that, I might as well do the extry work and have the money."

"Then excuse me, please."

And Mollie, ignoring her uncle's angry muttering at her obstinacy, rose and left the table.

But at the door she turned.

"Oh, Uncle Mike?"

"What then?" he returned sulkily.

"When does the election come off?"

"You know well enough; next Tuesday a week. And fur all his braggin' that he'll git elected, he ain't got no more chanct—"

"No, no, I don't mean the election for road supervisor. For school director?"

"On Thursday night. But he won't get appointed to that, neither. You needn't worry."

Mollie, getting her book from the parlor, went thoughtfully upstairs to her own bedchamber.

CHAPTER IV.

Her uncle's assertion that she had always been "a little feist" was not wholly unjustifiable. Had she not occasionally been "a feist," she would, under his conscientious efforts to assist Providence in making of her that which Mike earnestly believed all women were born to be, have grown up into a dull and spiritless household drudge, with no ambition other than to make comfortable that portion of the male creation committed to her care.

It was when she had reached the age of thirteen and was told her schooling was finished that for the first time she turned upon her oppressor, or rather oppressors, for the quiet obstinacy in

her aunt's character, as well as her "closeness" with money, had been scarcely less of a menace to the girl's free development than had her uncle's actual brutality.

Mollie had "fought like a cat" for permission to continue to go to school. It was not that at that early age she had any real appreciation of the value of an education. What drove her to her frenzied rebellion was that only at school could she have access to books, there being no books but the Bible at her uncle's; and books, she had early discovered, were the breath of her life. In the monotony of the unbroken drudgery of the summer vacations, with nothing whatever to feed the passionate hunger of a very active and eager brain, her starved mind developed a restlessness that nearly maddened her. To have these vacations from school prolonged, without break, through life—she could not face it.

But she had to pay very dearly for the grudging permission given her, in the added work laid upon her young shoulders.

"I leave you keep on goin' to school if you git up in time Mondays to help with the wash before you go," her uncle had stipulated, "and do the ironin' and sweepin' after school hours. Your aunt can't do it alone, and I ain't *hirin'*, with a big girl like you hangin' 'round the place. No, sir!"

She had promised to "work her fingers to the bone" if only he would let her go. He had taken her so entirely at her word that he had actually put her to lifting heavy grain sacks at his mill which stood across the road from his house, until the widespread scandal of the neighborhood obliged him to stop it.

It was two years later, in her fifteenth year, that Mollie had accidentally come upon the knowledge that her father had left her a small inheritance, of which, at that time, little remained, because of the inroads her uncle had made upon it to pay himself for boarding and clothing her, though the lash with which he had always goaded her to her too heavy tasks had been to remind her that he was providing her with a home.

The discovery that money had been left to her, together with the girl's deepening discontent in her environment, and her growing ambition, had lent to her, young as she was, an intrepidity before which her uncle had been sufficiently cowed to yield to her demand that what was left of her money be spent in sending her to the near-by normal school, an institution which in Mollie's eyes, at that time, represented the highest pinnacle of learning to which a mortal might aspire. Closer acquaintance with the institution had given her another point of view.

Indeed the process by which she had come to a new point of view in all her relations to life had been a very revolutionary one. It had been the intimacy which had quickly sprung up between her and the daughter of the professor of English at the normal school that had educated her far beyond anything she gleaned from textbooks. So close and warm had the intimacy grown that Mollie soon became almost like another daughter to the parents of her friend, and, as they were people of a quality not commonly met with in an educational institution of this sort, it had been for her a strenuous experience to get to the point of even vaguely comprehending what to her was their new and strange plane of life; to learn to adapt herself to the rarefied atmosphere of their cultured home without jarring upon it, and to assimilate its gracious spirit; she who had never known the meaning of graciousness.

But she had been swift to learn. Intellectually and emotionally, her whole being had responded to what was held out to her. During those four years away from her home, in closest touch with these people of a rare fineness, she had lived with an intensity that had carried her very far from the place at which she had started.

Once, in the bewilderment of her new and deep experiences, it had dawned upon her with a strange wonder that through sixteen years of her life these great things of existence, the things that lifted human beings above

the beasts—friendships, music, poetry, pictures, novels, the theater, the charms of social intercourse—had been non-existent so far as she was concerned.

"What I have missed! Oh! What I have missed!" she passionately lamented. "I've lived the life of a vegetable!"

But Professor Moore would never let her take a pessimistic or bitter view of anything.

"Bitterness is a canker in the mind. Root it out, and keep the soil healthy for what's worth cultivating. You've not had music, poetry, art, society? But, Mollie; life is not so unjust. It's all been stored up there within you, ready to bloom as soon as it was brought into the sun and air."

"But suppose it had never been brought into the sun and air?"

"It would have found its way. It always does."

At the present time, as we see Mollie on this autumn evening, sitting in her cozy, dainty bedchamber, her books and a few choice pictures—gifts of the Moores—about her, occupied in forcing herself to master the uninteresting details and intricacies of our civil government as set forth in a textbook, she belongs essentially, not to this environment in her uncle's home, but to that through which she had so painfully forged out all that gave to her life any meaning and worth.

Naturally, with this evolution of her mind and spirit, the girl's whole physical being had developed along a line that it might not have taken under other circumstances; the new fineness of her tastes and feelings was reflected in her countenance, in her whole bearing, manner, and dress; the earnestness of her very lovely young face gave her a look of distinction that many a shallow beauty at the school had noted with mystified envy. Mollie Graeff had moved among her mates with a notable preëminence.

The girl had learned, in her better experiences, to be conscious of, and to regret, the streak of hardness that her somber childhood had engendered in her. She cherished with a jealous care

the softening affection of the friends who had so helped her, knowing well that this leaven was the salvation of her otherwise lost soul; for had she not loved these friends, she would have hated her foster parents, and hate reads damnation. Upon this little leaven of love, however, she could rise to an indifference to her wrongs that recognized the not-worth-while-ness of avoidable misery and the possibility of extracting blessedness from any environment whatsoever.

Inasmuch as she had gone on studying at the normal school until her money was exhausted, she had rejoiced at securing the Webster Township school, through which she hoped to save enough money to get a year, eventually, at college or a course at the summer school of some university. It was not that she was so inordinately fond of study. She could say with Lowell that she loved all books but college textbooks. She had too much imagination not to crave the leisure for floating upon it to fields Elysian, rather than the incessant striving against the tide, which was her lot. But work and study were her only means of escape from the sort of life she was determined not to live—and so she worked and studied.

She wrote to Anna Moore:

The one demoralizing thing about my life here now is that in order to hold my own and not be crushed and jaded to death, I've got to live so selfish a life. If my aunt loved me, if there were not the constant necessity for my resisting their unconquerable tendency to take advantage of me, if there could be a spirit of mutual helpfulness, how much happier I would be and how much more normal! It is hideous, this fighting for one's bare existence; or it would be if I let it be. I keep it external from me as much as I can, and meantime try to practice the grace of unselfishness upon the school children.

There is a lot of gossip in the neighborhood about how "proud" I've grown. That's because I refuse to board at my uncle's unless I can live at *least* as decently as I could at the hotel, where I wouldn't pay any more board than Uncle Mike demands. You see my uncle is very well off, and there is no reason why we should live like savages. I might submit if they had ever given me one jot of a reason for sacrificing myself for their convenience. But as they have always "used" me for their own ends, I don't hesi-

tate, now, to exact my "money's worth." But think of living in such an atmosphere of tension, of jealous care lest you be "done" by those who ought to be so near to one! How glad I shall be, Anna, when I can get away from it all forever—if that time ever comes. But come it will, it must!

The country about here is so beautiful. How I could have learned to love it if it had not always been associated with the heart hunger and the bitterness of my life! So much so that, try as I will, I can't *dis*-associate it. And so, I should find my present circumstances pretty stultifying if it were not for the solace of books and of your letters. I can hear your dear father telling me that no mere circumstances need be stultifying; that stultification comes from a deadness within; that richness of life may be gleaned from any conditions, however meager or crude.

Yes, by a very strong character, no doubt. But that is what I fear I am not. Anyway, I am weak enough to suffer horribly from loneliness, away from you all. I believe if I have a talent for anything it's for friendship—I am by nature *such* a friendly, social being, Anna. And out here there isn't a living being to hold converse with in my own natural plane; especially as they've learned to look upon me as "proud." Gracious! How I ache to have you here for just five minutes as a safety valve for my pent-up feelings!

The thing which to-night made it more than usually hard for Mollie to fix her thoughts upon "Civil Government" was the dread possibility suggested by her Uncle Mike that she might lose her school through the antagonism of "the fighting doctor," as the people called him. If so determined an individual as he seemed to be *should* get on the board—with his evidently fierce dislike of her uncle!

"Just as if," she mentally groaned, feeling weary and discouraged before this new and formidable obstacle in her path, "I had not enough to contend with, without being made the scapegoat for Uncle Mike's political idiosyncrasies! Why can't that ridiculous 'fighting doctor' confine his bullying to people of his own size? He must be a very small individual indeed to take Uncle Mike so seriously as to want to fight him and his whole family."

CHAPTER V.

"If it ain't Doctor Thorpe hisself!" breathlessly cried Mrs. Butz, quickly closing the shutter through which she



"If you was any account as a doctor, you'd be too busy to be buttin' into politics."

had peeped and turning to her husband, who, at the sound of an automobile stopping at their gate, had curiously, though more slowly, followed his wife's flying haste to the front of the house.

"Gosh! You're jollyin', ain't you?" he demanded, incredulous and amazed.

"Don't you hear fur yourself his old ottomobile thumpin' out there?"

"Well, honest to gosh!"

"Yes, I think!"

"What fur would he come *here* yet?"

"Yes, anyhow!"

"And only three days till election a'ready! He sure ain't got the cheek to come here astin' *me* to wote fur him fur road superwisor!"

"Cheek enough fur any old thing *he's* got, Aaron!"

"But, Meely, he knows how I'm workin' agin' him and standin' in with Mike Goodman. Not that he'd have

any chances, anyhow—spitin' the farmers the way he does with that dinged old road drag of hisn! But if it don't beat all, his comin' to me! Well, I'll wander out to see what he wants off of me. Whatever it is, it's what he won't git."

As Doctor Thorpe, in duster and cap, jumped out of his car and walked up the garden path to the porch of the tightly closed farmhouse—made as nearly air tight as possible to exclude dust—Aaron Butz, a brawny, dull-looking man, clad only in shirt and trousers, an old dirty felt hat on the back of his head, strolled leisurely from around the house with an air of such elaborate and self-betraying indifference that the doctor recognized at a glance his state of inflamed curiosity concerning this naturally inexplicable visit.

Butz was a well-to-do, retired farmer, whose too great leisure had become a prolific source of mischief, having led him to tie himself up, in a strong political partnership, to the fortunes of his neighbor, Mike Goodman; a partnership which had long proved mutually profitable.

"Good morning," Thorpe nodded curtly. "You're the secretary of the board of road supervisors, I believe?"

"You 'believe'!" Butz drawled sarcastically, bristling with antagonism. "You bet you do!"

"Then I will trouble you, if you please, to let me inspect your books."

Aaron stared. "Huh! Inspect my books yet! Well, well, try another, stranger!"

"As a taxpayer of the township, I have a legal right to see your accounts. You know that. Any taxpayer may at any time inspect the records of the expenditures made by the township's officers. So I will trouble you."

"Huh! But I ain't so easy troubled."

"Without any delay. I am very busy to-day."

"Busy with mindin' other people's business, ain't? Yes, us we all know how busy you are with *that*. But you ain't mindin' to *my* business, I kin tell you. I kin take care of it without your

help. Leastways I always have did so before you come, so I guess I kin worry through till a little while longer yet. See?"

"Not very much longer, Mr. Butz, without my help. I mean to see your books this morning. I stand on my rights as a taxpayer, you know."

"May I inquire what you want to see them books *fur*?"

"Merely to learn what, in God's name, is *done* with the money paid into the treasury for road repairing. That's all."

"And blab it out to the woters, ain't?" Aaron exclaimed injudiciously.

"Exactly. You've got my idea."

"If you was any account as a doctor, you'd be too busy to be buttin' into politics."

"Fortunately I'm not too busy to take a careful look at your books this morning."

"Now, you don't say? Unfortunately I ain't got time this morning, neighbor, to trot 'em out. So," said Aaron, turning away and taking a step toward the house, "we'll say good-by."

"When I've seen your books."

"Good-by, doc. Come again when you ain't got so much time to waste."

"Very well. I will. Within an hour, Mr. Butz. I shall not need to waste time, for I shall bring an officer with me. Good-by! Within an hour."

He turned at once to go down the walk.

"Hi, there!" Aaron stopped him.

"Well? Be quick with what you've got to say—if it needs to be said."

Aaron laughed, though he looked "ugly," as his wife was wont to describe that particular expression which now came over his face.

"Ain't you the windbag, though! You'll fetch an officer yet! Well, anyhow! You must think you're Teddy Roosevelt, and kin run Webster Township like he runs this here United States of America. But you *ain't* Teddy Roosevelt, mind you. That's the thing we're a-goin' to learn you next Tuesday at the election."

"It might be well for you to bear in mind," said the doctor, drawing on his

glove, "that I managed to win my case over you fellows in the Lebanon County courts, and to get appointed, last night, to your school board to fill out Holzapple's term. Maybe I can manage a few more things."

"The school board ain't the road supervisors' board, by a thunderin' long sight. And you wouldn't have made even the school board at no reg'lar election. This here was only an *appointment*. Nor you wouldn't of made even that if the county superintendent hadn't of been a friend of yours and bullied the farmers of the board into thinkin' you'd advance the cause of education because you was college educated yourself."

"If," returned the doctor, "you're not going to show your books without being *made* to show them, I'm going. Well?"

"You're the first person yet," affirmed Aaron, growing sullenly angry and evidently very uneasy, "that ever come here with such a crazy, impudent request since I was secretary of the road supervisors' board a'ready!"

"Most of the voters and taxpayers don't even know that they have the right to inspect the books which record what use is made of their money. But they are going to know it, Mr. Butz, and this township is going to have good roads—and no mud. Good morning!"

"Here, then!" Again Mr. Butz stopped him with a growl.

"You give in?"

"You wait here till I go over to the hotel and phone to Mike Goodman to see oncet what *he's* got to say."

"He has absolutely nothing to do with the case, and I won't wait another minute. Your books, or I bring an officer and *take* them."

"This here," thought Aaron, as, thus coerced, he surrendered and led the way into the house, his anxiety and rage oddly mixed with a sneaking admiration, "is the way he does it, then, ain't? Just keeps on tuggin' till he lands his fish *whether* or no! Huh!"

An hour later, the doctor having departed, a small notebook filled with memoranda tucked into his inner breast pocket, Aaron, with rather heavy mis-

givings, wended his way to "the mill" to talk things over with his fellow citizen, Mike Goodman.

"What'll Mike think, anyhow, of somepin like this? Don't it, now, beat all? Comin' to my own house yet and bullyin' me into leavin' him see my own accounts just two days before the election comes off fur road supervisor! Gosh! I must be dreamin' when I think I *showed* 'em to him! Mike'll be hot! But I couldn't git out of it. Leastways I don't see *how* I could. I'd of left him go *bring* an officer, but it might go into the county noospapers, and *then* what would be to pay? It might of lost us the election yet. I don't see as he got much, anyhow, out of them records of ourn."

He fell to wondering, as he passed the schoolhouse in which Mollie Graeff was teaching, how the Goodmans were feeling over the doctor's appointment to the school board.

"It won't go long till he gits Mollie put off *her* job. He kin easy do it, too, the president of the board bein' Mike's enemy and on the doctor's side in this here fight fur good roads. Yes, Mollie, she has the right to worry fur her job," was Aaron's conclusion, as he reached the mill. "Full much so!"

CHAPTER VI.

It was the next day that Mollie, on her way to school, read the typewritten communication which that morning had been received by her Uncle Mike and by every voting citizen of Webster Township—a communication which had excited her uncle to such a frenzy of animosity, not to say alarm, that he had gone forth from his house with the affirmation that not until he had "licked" that meddler, mischief maker, and general public nuisance, Doctor Thorpe, would he return.

"You better watch out," his wife had anxiously warned him, "fur they say he's awful powerful!"

"Yes," Mollie nodded, as she contemplated this master stroke of diplomacy on the part of Doctor Thorpe, "I think he must be merely a vulgar politician,

posing as a serious reformer. This sensational circular proves it."

She shrugged contemptuously as she read it, though she had to admit its cleverness.

TO THE VOTERS OF WEBSTER TOWNSHIP:

If you wish to know how your money is spent by your officers, you may find recorded in your secretary's books the fact that in the recent trial of Doctor Thorpe, all those witnesses who testified against the use of the road, were paid out of the township funds. The sixty dollars' fee to the lawyer who handled the case for the supervisors' board was also paid from the township funds. One hundred dollars of your money expended by political grafters to defeat the cause of good roads in your community! For half the sum now wasted in graft your roads could be kept, with the use of the inexpensive King road drag, in good condition for every kind of travel. Doctor Thorpe's election to the board will insure an honest use of the funds and good roads.

"He could take no surer way," thought Mollie, "of rousing the township against Uncle Mike and the rest of the board than this appeal to their Pennsylvania Dutch thrift. And once convince the invincibly honest Mennonites of the township that there is the least crookedness in the dealings of the board, and that board is doomed. Well, the man had some ground for his boast—which seemed to me so futile as to be weak-minded—that he would be elected next Tuesday."

She sighed in deep discouragement as she realized her own precarious position, now that this formidable enemy of her uncle, with his openly avowed antagonism to herself, had been appointed to the school board.

A turn in the road brought her to the "general store," which was also the post office, where to her alarm she found that she had come upon an excited crowd, the center of which was her Uncle Mike confronting aggressively a tall, broad-shouldered man in a linen duster and motor cap.

"I'll kick hell out of you if you don't mind to your own business!" her uncle was shouting.

"I am minding my own business, Mike; I'm making this township a wholesome place," returned the doctor, with brisk cheerfulness.

"What's your game, anyhow? What are you after? That's what us peaceable citizens would like to know!"

"My 'game' is to loosen your grip on the township treasury."

"I say," shouted Mike, "I'll sue you for libel!"

"You won't get far on that line—not while the records of the secretary of the supervisors' board show up the facts I saw there yesterday. Open to inspection," he addressed the crowd, "to all citizens."

"I tell you I'll knock hell out of you if you don't leave me be!"

"I'm not going to let you be. So do it now," said the doctor, standing motionless.

"You say another word agin' me 'round here where I'm respected like you never will be—and you look out!"

"All right, I'll say it right now. You're a scoundrel, Mike. So come ahead and try it on."

Oh, why, thought Mollie, had her uncle been so short-sighted as to get himself into such a fix? For he could not fight. He was a coward at heart, as every man is who bullies women and children. He controlled men by his cunning, but never in all his life, she was sure, had he stood up fearlessly to a man. And a man like this awful doctor!

"No," growled Mike, "I ain't a-goin' to fight you now. But you just wait! You just——"

"If you're not going to do it now, stand aside and let me pass. And another day don't block my path; I might be obliged to knock you down."

With which the doctor, pushing through the crowd to his automobile in the road, accidentally laid his hand, with no light touch, upon Mollie's shoulder—and instantly realizing, before seeing her, that he had pushed aside a woman, he turned with a quick apologetic lifting of his cap. For a brief instant their eyes met, his with a questioning surprise, hers with a melancholy consideration of him as she slightly inclined her head in acknowledgment of his apology; she was the first to move on, his surprised and puz-

zled glance following her for a moment before he went out to his car.

Mollie was too intelligent not to understand that look of puzzled surprise.

"As who should say: 'Who the devil is she?' Well, I am not more startlingly different from anything one would expect to see in Daniel Webster Township than he is himself. Only I being the niece and foster daughter of the poor wretch he had just invited to 'Come ahead and try it on,' and being some of the 'mud' he means to get rid of, now he is a school director——"

Mollie bit her lip to check a rising sob.

"If he did guess who I was, no doubt he was more surprised than ever. Expected me to look like a smaller edition of Uncle Mike, I suppose, judging from the way he talks all over the township."

She had to admit that the sight of him this morning had modified the impression his circular had made upon her. Even if he were a mere vulgar politician, he was unquestionably a *man*, and, unless his appearance was most misleading, a gentleman.

"All the same, he must be a poor, cheap creature to let personal spite make him try to drive from Webster Township a far better teacher, I am sure, than they ever had here!"

It seemed indeed an untoward fate that chose that very morning, of all times, for an occasion to arise which must give the new school director the chance which the whole township seemed to know he desired, to replace Mollie Graeff with a teacher of his own selection.

This chance came in the open rupture which took place between Mollie and the school bully, Jake Schmidt, who, as ill luck would have it, was the son of the school board's president, the only man on the board who was an avowed enemy of her Uncle Mike and a follower of Doctor Thorpe.

Mollie had, from the first day of her teaching, foreseen difficulties in this quarter, and, as she was passionately anxious to keep her position, she had "gone softly" in her dealings with the

burly, seventeen-year-old clown whose sole idea of his business at school was to torment small boys and defy the young woman in authority over him.

His father had strongly opposed her election, and had been greatly chagrined at the school's being given to his enemy's niece. Now that his opposition was reinforced by Doctor Thorpe's, her pupil, Jacob Schmidt, held her, she knew, in the hollow of his hand, and she knew that *he* knew it.

To-day, however, he overstepped the limit of her forbearance. All the morning she had patiently borne with his extraordinary stupidity; as, for instance, his persistent failure to understand her explanation in physics of why a glass cracked in hot water, his only response to the question, after repeated elucidations on her part, being the sullen statement: "It gits so hot it's *got* to bust." She had only sighed deeply at his assertion in the history class that Congress had power to suppress "resurrections," and that Abe Lincoln was dead, having been killed at a moving-picture show; and she had refrained from either laughter or tears when he had hazarded that the cause of the Pope's displeasure on the occasion of Mr. Roosevelt's recent visit to Rome was the colonel's trying to replace the Roman Catholic pontiff with a Protestant pope. All these were things she could not only endure and overlook, but even find drearly enjoyable.

But when, in the course of the morning, suddenly upon the quiet of the schoolroom Jake's coarse voice had risen in an angry and wholly unfounded accusation of theft against the one negro who attended the school, a little girl of thirteen, Mollie knew that the crisis had come.

"They's some money cheated out of my toot!" he bawled, rising at his desk and holding up an envelope containing some money. "I had three dimes in my toot, and here's only one a'ready! It's that nigger, Eva Johnson, took it, I bet you!"

Instantly Mollie was on her feet, her face flushed, her eyes sparkling.



"Let us hear your reason, Jacob, for accusing Eva Johnson, before the school, of taking your money."

"And you bet," he cried before Mollie could speak, "she's got to give it back, or I'll lick her till she does!"

"Eva Johnson, will you come to the platform?"

Eva, the whites of her eyes showing large with fright, rose and obeyed, while Mollie distinctly felt the quiver that ran over the school, of indignant protest against what appeared like an outrageous favoritism toward Jake Schmidt, in thus haling forth the accused unheard.

Eva, by the time she reached Mollie's side, was shaking with crying.

"I didn't cheat no money out of his toot, Miss Mollie!"

"Jacob, come to the platform," Mollie commanded.

The youth, thinking as a matter of course that "the game" was his, obeyed readily.

"Now, then," said Mollie, when the two were before her, "let us hear your reason, Jacob, for accusing Eva Johnson, before the school, of taking your money."

"Whether I have reason? Ain't it a reason enough that I brang two dimes to school in this here toot, and now

there's only one in it—and a *nigger* sittin' in the seat behind me?"

Mollie, holding herself in hand with difficulty, appealed to the school.

"Can any one give any account of the disappearance of Jacob's dimes?"

There was no response, and not a sound broke the breathless expectancy of the school.

"Then, Jacob, you have no witnesses and no proofs?" she inquired.

"I got proofs aplenty. The dimes was there, and then they *wasn't* there—and niggers is all thieves—anybody knows that."

"Now, then," Mollie turned squarely upon the big, skulking creature before her, "Jacob Schmidt, you have, without the least shadow of proof, publicly accused a schoolmate of theft and openly insulted her. You will as openly acknowledge your mistake, and very humbly apologize to Eva Johnson—and to the school, and to me."

An instant's absolute silence met this unexpected turn—when suddenly, like a pistol shot, an outburst of applause broke upon the room, loud and enthusiastic, which continued until Mollie raised her hand to stop it.

"We are ready to hear you," she announced to Jacob.

"Ha!" he laughed. "Ha, ha! See me apologize to a nigger! Ha!"

"Instantly! Or walk out of this room. And until you are ready to stand on this platform and do as I tell you to do, you do not come back."

"Who'll keep me away, heh?" he asked jeeringly, and the pertinence of the question was appreciated by even the youngest child in the school.

"Very well," Mollie responded, "if I am not able to put you out of my school, at least I shall not hear you recite until you have made a public apology to Eva Johnson, to me, and to the school."

"When I apologize to a nigger, it'll be a cold day!"

"Then you are suspended until you obey me. Eva"—Mollie turned and spoke gently to the little girl—"you may go to your seat."

As the child obeyed, Mollie, ignoring

the great fellow on the platform, seated herself at her desk, and proceeded with her work.

Jacob, for a moment at a loss, after an instant's consideration of his awkward situation, stalked down the aisle, and defiantly took his seat.

Throughout the remainder of the morning, Mollie continued to ignore him. When his class in arithmetic was called, he presented himself with the rest, but she acted as though he were not there.

She reflected as, during the noon recess, she walked home that Jacob's father would not only uphold and applaud him in his insubordination; he would be outraged at his son's being ordered by Mike Goodman's niece to apologize to "a nigger." And if Jake, continuing in his defiance, came back that afternoon and she should persist in her course of ignoring him and refusing to teach him, Mr. Schmidt would, with Doctor Thorpe's assistance, eagerly seize the opportunity to work her out of her place. All this she realized, and her heart was heavy with foreboding.

Nevertheless, upon Jake's aggressively presenting himself at the afternoon session, she did not waver in the least in the course she had undertaken. Nor did her resolution falter when he appeared again the next morning, although she had received, upon calling at the post office on her way to school, a summons, signed by the president of the board, to appear before the assembled school directors that night at eight-thirty o'clock sharp, at the office of Doctor Thorpe, to answer complaints made against her objectionable methods of discipline.

CHAPTER VII.

Doctor Thorpe's evening consulting hours were over, and the school board had begun to assemble in his large back office, three of the six members being already gathered about the cheerful open fire, bending forward to warm their rough hands after their long drive in the chill autumn night.

The doctor, seated apart at his desk, was thoughtfully considering these three "grave and reverend seigneurs," who were all Mennonites, one Old Mennonite and two New Mennonites, clad in the priestlike garb of their faith, the New Mennonite costume being a bit more "plain" than the Old. All three of them had been converted by the doctor's circular from the strongest antagonism to him and his road reforms to an equal antagonism against Mike Goodman and his followers. Nothing save a convincing appeal to their "Dutch" thrift and Mennonite honesty could so have changed their prejudiced attitude.

"It certainly is some muddy out, ain't?" remarked the Old Mennonite member, looking ruefully at the dirt his boots were depositing on the doctor's floor.

"Out West where I went last winter to visit my brother Abe, the mud's mostly black," returned the New Mennonite conversationally. "But here in Webster Township it's most any color, ain't?"

"Yes, ain't?"

"You begun soon, doctor—ain't?—to git after Mollie Graeff? The very day after you're appointed a'ready," the other New Mennonite remarked curiously.

"It's not I that am 'after' her. This is Schmidt's case."

"But it looks some as if you was havin' a hand in it, too, when you're, anyhow, havin' us meet here at your place to try her!"

"Schmidt arranged that, too—with my consent, of course."

"I guess," nodded one of the New Mennonites knowingly, "you and Schmidt understands pretty good what you're plannin' together."

"I don't even know what the row's about."

"And you didn't wait to find out, neither," grinned the member, "before lendin' a hand to oust her, ain't?"

"I consented to let the board meet here because there's illness at the hotel. Can any of you tell me what it's all about?"

"Well, you've got a good case agin' her, so far forth as that goes. It seems," the Old Mennonite volunteered to inform him, "that Mollie she sassed Jakey Schmidt in front of the whole school and made the scholars clap her yet; to be sure, Mollie she'd be only too glad of a chanct to spite Jakey when his pop's workin' so hard agin' her Uncle Mike and *fur* you. So she wouldn't hear Jakey say his lessons all day. Just left him set, and wouldn't learn him nothin'. To be sure, Jake's pop ain't takin' *that* off of her—her refusin' to learn Jakey when that's what this here board pays her *fur* doin'."

"Of course not," responded the doctor. "Has the girl no common sense?"

"You see her goin' to Kutztown Normal got her so proud," explained the member. "I guess we made a mistake when we gev her our school. She don't make herself common enough."

"But one thing," the less talkative member feebly came to her defense, "if she ain't nice and common like some, I took notice a'ready when I seen her on comp'ny, she's honest when she speaks—she don't speak things just to please."

"If she really wants the school," speculated the doctor, "one would think she would act with a little more diplomacy in dealing with 'Jakey,' the son of the president of the board. Not to mention her extraordinary ideas of her duties! Refusing to teach one of her pupils, out of 'spite,' as you put it. We want another sort of teacher altogether. Not a mere chit of a girl who regards her position only as a means of acquiring more blouses and other finery! We ought not to have a native of the township at all in our school. In any community it is always better to utilize the teaching posts for bringing in fresh outside life. Now, if we could get a really cultured city woman here, what a heaven it might be in the whole life of the neighborhood!"

"Yes, well, *but!*" the Old Mennonite remarked dubiously.

"Mike Goodman, he's got his troubles with her, too," said the New Mennonite, "with her bein' so high-minded that way and havin' sich tony ways."



She stood—and, though her voice as she spoke was rather low, it was clear and even.

"In any case," said the doctor conclusively, "this girl must be brought to do her work properly, or be removed."

"To be sure, we all know you're agin' her," nodded the Old Mennonite.

"Here they come!" announced a member, at the sound of the outer door's opening, and the doctor rose and stood by his desk as they filed in—Jacob Schmidt, Senior, Hiram Unger, Sam Spatz, and, demurely bringing up the rear, the maiden, young and fair, for whose trial they were assembled.

"So *she* is Mollie Graeff!" thought the doctor, a bit startled, as he recognized in her the girl he had yesterday encountered for an instant before the post office—just after humiliating her

uncle in the presence of their neighbors. It had seemed to him, then, impossible that a young woman who looked like that should *belong* to Webster Township.

He felt a faint amusement in noting how the lovely coloring of her youthful head mocked the sober apparel she had evidently thought befitting this grim occasion.

He stepped forward to place a chair for her near the fire.

"Allow me," he said, with grave courtesy, turning the chair away from the glare of the light.

"Thank you."

With the utmost self-possession, she seated herself, her manner so entirely neutral that he was taken aback. He had expected to find the damsel either tearful or brazen, abashed or defiant. But she bore herself with a grace

and ease one would certainly not look for in a poor little county school-teacher haled for judgment before a lot of bucolic "Dutch" farmers. Was she, then, so indifferent to her fate? Or so cocksure of winning out against the Schmidts? Her composed demeanor gave him no clew.

"No doubt she thinks she can work the board as she works her uncle," thought the doctor, grimly determining she should have the lesson she needed.

This manner of Mollie's, however, if he had only known it, was wholly affected. She was, in truth, half wild with anxiety for her position, and was with difficulty keeping her teeth from chattering. It was her fear of showing

how abject she felt that lent her her air of unnatural calm and dignity.

As Doctor Thorpe again seated himself apart at his desk, resting his elbow on the lid and his forehead on his fingers, Mollie felt his wary scrutiny of her; and in her fear she felt that she hated him in his strength and security.

The president now "took the chair," and the meeting being called to order, Mr. Schmidt announced that before attending to the special matter for which the board was assembled, there were a few other things they might use this occasion to settle. For instance, he understood that Jonas Herr had a proposition he wished to present to the board.

Jonas Herr rose to make his proposition, which was that the board should vote to shorten the school term.

"Seven months they want us to spare our children to go to school. It's too much, I say. We need 'em at home more. Five months fur school would be a plenty."

"But," Hiram Unger rose to object, "most of us would like the term longer yet. Seven months—it's too little out the whole year fur education."

"Yes, well, but I can't, anyhow, spare my big boys till harvestin' is done a ready," answered Jonas, "so why fur should I have to pay taxes fur seven months when I can't leave 'em go but only five? Shorten the term, and you ain't got so much taxes to pay. Why, look at the taxes we got to pay! Property tax, road tax, dog tax, school tax! It's too much!" he argued, with heat.

"A hard enough fight we had to git our seven months' term!" Hiram said, with some indignation. "This here township is fur *progress*, not fur back-slidin'."

Hiram's sentiment on the subject being that of the other members, Jonas failed to carry his point.

This matter being disposed of, as also a few small business items, Mr. Schmidt at length rose to explain that the special object of the meeting to-night was to decide whether Webster Township school board wished to retain a teacher who, "out of spite," refused for two days to hear a pupil recite, and

held him up before the whole school to be laughed at.

"Neither on his book *nor* on the blackboard would she leave our Jakey recite," complained Jacob's father.

"And what fur a reason yet does she, anyhow, give fur such behaviors?" asked Sam Spatz.

"Her reason being," Mr. Schmidt indignantly explained, "that our Jake, he wouldn't do it to apologize before the whole school to a *nigger*!"

"Well, I guess, anyhow, not!" said Jonas Herr.

"Yes, that would be, now, too much to ask!" added Hiram Unger.

"The nigger, she stole a couple dimes off of Jakey's desk, and when he was tryin' to make her give it back, teacher she butted in, and called Jakey up before the whole school, and said how he'd apologize or go home; and when he wouldn't do neither the one *nor* the other, then she wouldn't learn him yet! Members of the board," said the elder Schmidt oratorically, "you now have the fac's. You dare now proceed to act on 'em."

Mr. Schmidt sat down, and after a moment Sam Spatz arose.

"To be sure, we ain't makin' a white scholar apologize to no black one, fur all we don't uphold to slavery nor to showin' partiality. But *apologizin'*—that's somepin else agin'. Therefore, it's very plain that we can't keep no teacher that asks such things as them off of a scholar and won't do it to learn him yet. I don't see no way to settle this here thing but to give teacher two weeks' notice till we git another teacher."

Spatz sat down. The Old Mennonite cleared his throat and rose.

"I pass it as my opinion that we got no need to go so fur as to chase teacher off her job. Leave *her* apologize to Jakey, and promise she won't cut up like this here no more—and we'll give her another chanct. Say not?"

"I'm agin' it!" stoutly maintained Mr. Schmidt. "She's showed herself unfit fur to be a guide of the young—havin' a scholar up before the whole school to make fun of him!"

There was a pause. Every one was looking at the doctor and wondering why he did not make himself heard. But he kept his seat, his elbow on his desk, his forehead against the tips of his fingers, and he made no move to speak.

"The members of this here board," said Schmidt, "I am sure would like fur Doctor Thorpe to pass *his* opinion."

But the doctor did not rise.

"Let us hear," he answered, "from Miss Graeff."

All eyes turned now expectantly to Mollie.

She stood—and, though her voice as she spoke was rather low, it was clear and even.

"Yesterday morning Jacob Schmidt missed two dimes from an open envelope on his desk. In the presence of the school he accused Eva Johnson of having stolen it, calling her 'a nigger' and 'a thief.' I asked him for proof of so serious an accusation, and also appealed to the school for any possible proofs. There was no evidence whatever of Eva's having taken the money. So I called both Jacob and Eva to the platform and said that, as Jacob, without the least justification, had publicly insulted the girl, he must publicly apologize to her. Also to the school and to me. He refused to do it. I told him he must go home, and not come back until he was ready to obey. The school was so in sympathy with this that they applauded. Jacob refused to go home, and he came to school all day to-day. I acted as though he were not there—and I shall continue to do so, so long as I am the teacher—until he obeys me."

Mollie sat down. There was a moment's deep silence.

Then Hiram Unger again rose.

"The fac's is the same—but it sounds some different, too, again, when she tells it off." He hesitated. "We would like to hear the members pass their opinions."

And now at last the doctor stood up.

"It is by your own ruling, gentlemen, that the colored child is allowed to attend the school with your own sons and daughters. For myself, I am op-

posed to the mingling of the two races in schools. A child of mine should never attend your school while black children are admitted. But since you do allow it, the colored child is entitled to protection from insult and injustice. This, evidently, is Miss Graeff's conviction—else why should she act so contrary to her own interests as to defend the little black girl against the son of the school board's president?"

"Fur spite!" sputtered Schmidt cholericly. "Because I'm agin' her Uncle Mike and *fur* you!"

"Well, whatever her motive, her *action* was entirely within her rights in her own schoolroom. A pupil of hers was publicly insulted—offensively accused, without the least proof, of a theft. She demanded an apology from the accuser. Isn't that the *least* she could do? If we had a man at our school, as evidently we ought to have, Jakey would not have got off so easily!"

"Oh, yes, he would! A man would have better sense still as to go agin' his own bread and butter by takin' up fur a nigger girl agin' Jakey and his pop," grinned Hiram Unger.

"If you *want* such favoritism to be shown—" The doctor paused tentatively.

"An example of prudence ain't no bad thing, neither, fur our childern to see," said the Old Mennonite, "though to be sure, prudence coupled with justice, if it could be worked, would go better."

"Anyhow," angrily maintained Schmidt, "if Jakey won't apologize, he *won't*. Then, is he to be left set and not get learnt all winter?"

"Do we wish discipline maintained in our school?" asked the doctor. "How, otherwise, can any teacher work? One of two things we must do: Elect a man with a brawny arm, as teacher, able to deal with big fellows like Jakey Schmidt—and the case before us has certainly brought out the advisability of our doing that—"

"But a man teacher we have to pay more!" objected Jonas Herr.

"Then, the work we can't afford to pay for, we must do ourselves. If we

foolishly employ a— a mere girl— we've got to back her up in keeping order. There doesn't seem to be any question before the board to-night except the utter inefficiency of a girl in maintaining discipline."

"This is somepin new ag'in—the doctor standin' up fur Mike Goodman's niece, agin' Jake Schmidt's boy," grinned a New Mennonite.

The other members, also, looked as though they could not be hearing aright. For the doctor to go against his strongest supporter on the very eve of the election for which he had worked so hard—what did he mean?

"I am not standing up for any individual, but for common justice," said the doctor. "I suppose we all understand that we are here for but one purpose—to do what is best for the school of the district. If you think, then, that there is any question before you at this time, it is this: Will it serve the interests of our school better to uphold the teacher whom we have put in authority over our children, in her apparently disinterested defense of the humblest and most defenseless child in her charge, or to uphold the pupil who defies her authority."

"But when she abuses the authority we gev her—"

"Just how has she abused it?"

"We don't know yet but what Evy Johnson did take these dimes."

"That's just it—we don't know. Therefore, if we do discharge this teacher, it must be because of her inability to thrash Jakey Schmidt!"

Amid an astonished silence, Mollie rose.

"This morning, when Jacob presented himself at his geography class, against my orders, of course, his dimes fell out of his book when he opened it. The whole class saw it. So we do know that Eva Johnson did not take his money."

Unreasonably enough, this statement seemed to have more weight in settling the case than anything that had been said in the course of the meeting.

"Then, to be sure, teacher she has

right," affirmed the two New Mennonites in chorus.

"I move," said the Old Mennonite, "that we give teacher right."

This was, of course, opposed with violence by Mr. Schmidt. But after a short parleying, it was carried.

Before a motion to adjourn could be made, the doctor again rose to address the board.

"The case we have had to deal with this evening has brought out some facts to which I would draw your attention.

"First: A young girl just out of her teens is not a fit person to be in authority over a dozen lusty youths like Jakey Schmidt. I'd as lief advocate child labor in factories. A male teacher would not in the end cost us so much, for we should not be called upon to use up our time in helping him out with his job, as we have to do in the case of our present employee.

"Secondly: I am opposed to giving this position to one to whom self-support is not a necessity.

"Thirdly: Graduates from our men's colleges these days are taking positions as street-car conductors, elevator men, anything as a stepping-stone. Why should we not utilize some of this excellent material? It might be of inestimable benefit to the boys of our township to have a really trained college man over them.

"Fourthly: We have in our employ a teacher who, however inefficient because of the disabilities of her sex and age, is apparently disinterested and conscientious. Apparently, I say.

"Lastly: This is not of course the time to discuss my proposition that we get a college-bred male teacher, but I leave it with you for your consideration until the election at the end of the term two months hence."

He sat down, and for a moment no one spoke.

Then Mollie, looking very pale, rose to ask a question: "May I inquire what I am to do with Jacob Schmidt if he insists upon coming to school and refuses to obey me?"

"Jacob must fall in line," promptly

affirmed the doctor, "or the directors will attend to *his* case. Eh, Schmidt?"

"I ain't leavin' him apologize to no nigger!"

"The board rules otherwise, Mr. Schmidt."

"And I ain't keepin' him home, neither! And he ain't to be left set!" exclaimed the irate father. "And you, Doctor Thorpe, you done this here! You needn't count on *my* wote to-morrow! You——"

But a hasty motion to adjourn, which was unceremoniously carried over the president's head, cut short his tirade.

"Well, anyhow," one of the Menonites privately offered consolation to the doctor for the loss of a vote as they all rose to leave, "it'll git put out before election yet how you're so much fur honesty that you even went agin' Jake Schmidt the night before election and stood up for your enemy's niece — just because you seen she had right — fur all you're so strong agin' her and purfer a male outsider."

As Mollie, her face white and strained, walked to the door, the doctor quickly stepped forward to open it for her.

"You are alone, Miss Graeff?"

"Yes, Doctor Thorpe."

"It is ten o'clock—you can't go home alone. If you will allow me——"

"Thank you, I am not at all afraid. Good night!"

She bowed, and moved on into the outer office. But the doctor kept at her side.

"It would not be safe. I must beg you to allow me to take you home."

She lifted very mournful eyes to his.

"All the highwaymen I shall encounter, Doctor Thorpe, will not damage me as *you* mean to."

"Damage' you? But that school is too much for you!"

"I entirely differ with you."

"Which makes my duty less easy," he gravely responded.

"I am sure you are seriously mistaken, doctor, in your idea of your duty to the Webster Township school. It has a better teacher than it deserves."

"That is possible. However," he affirmed, picking up in passing to the front door his hat and coat, "I am not mistaken in my conviction that you must not be allowed to walk a mile alone on a country road at ten o'clock at night."

But she hastily interposed.

"Jonas Herr can see me home—he goes my way. I may go with you, Jonas?" she asked of the little farmer behind her.

"If you want. It makes me nothin'," was Jonas' gallant response.

"Observe how gushing Jonas is, Doctor Thorpe. So you see, I shall be well protected. Good night!" she said, resolutely stepping out to the porch.

He did not protest further, but let her go under the knightly protection of Jonas Herr, to whom it didn't "make nothing" whether or not she "walked along."

When the door had closed upon the last of the members, the doctor walked thoughtfully back to the inner office, and sat down once more before his desk.

"What an anomaly!" he said to himself, as he idly fingered a paper cutter. "Mike Goodman's niece! And brought up right here in Webster! I can't make it out. The way she expresses herself and carries herself! Kutztown Normal never did all that for her. It's actually mysterious. Well," he concluded, "she certainly is a delectable bit of flesh and blood!"

Subsequently, however, he found his mind dwelling, not so much on the girl's beauty as on her countenance, her look of intelligence, the character in her face.

"That's it—she has a look of *character*, without which I do believe any face is common, however beautiful, and *with* which any face is well bred. Still"—he shrugged—"there's no getting around the fact that the *fiber* of her is Pennsylvania Dutch, and therefore common. We ought to replace her at the next election. What makes it a bit difficult"—he frowned—"is that the maiden evidently wants to keep the job."

But she has no business to want it, no business at all when her uncle is the richest old scamp in the township. Anyway," he decided, rising to wind his office clock for the night, "I want to see what a *cultured* teacher, not a normal-school product, can do for this community."

Meanwhile Jonas Herr, walking on the highroad with Mollie, was adding to her wretchedness by repeating to her the reasons Doctor Thorpe had urged, before her arrival this evening, for "putting her off her job," dwelling lovingly upon the doctor's statement that she used her salary to buy new shirt waists, and that therefore her position

ought to be given to one who needed it.

"When it is a matter of life and death to me to keep it!" Mollie inwardly groaned. "The only means I have for working out my freedom! What human being could need it more? Without it, I am Uncle Mike's chattel, and I'd rather be dead!"

Though Doctor Thorpe had actually saved her to-night from losing the school at once, she knew, with a sickening despondency, that she could not reasonably entertain the shadow of a hope that he would not, two months hence, replace her with a teacher of his own selection.

TO BE CONTINUED.



In Schoolhouse Lane

IN Schoolhouse Lane, in Schoolhouse Lane,
I hear the footfalls once again,
Soft as the drip of summer rain,
In Schoolhouse Lane.

Maiden and lad are passing by;
I hear their shout and cheerful cry;
Nor dream of years brings sob or sigh,
In Schoolhouse Lane.

The reddened clover blooms once more,
The recess bell rings from the door,
And childish feet stamp on the floor—
In Schoolhouse Lane.

There, at the western window sill,
I would that I were watching still,
My sky with fabled clouds to fill,
In Schoolhouse Lane.

Fade mart and market, spire and tower;
Fade pomp and sham; go pride and power;
Time, give me back my boyish hour—
In Schoolhouse Lane!

J. J. MEEHAN.



BY WALLACE
IRWIN

Municipal Perfection

ILLUSTRATED
BY H.V. MAYER

TEN thousand leagues beneath the sea
An awful pretty town there be.
Atlantis is the name of it.
Atlantic City?—not a bit!

This town, removed from common folks
Like grafting politician blokes,
Is awful different, in truth,
From Paris, London, or Duluth.

The streets are built of solid gold,
All studded round with gems untold,
Yet no one tries to swipe a pound
Of that there wealth what lies around.

There's quietness and perfect peace,
No murders, burglars, nor police,
No shouting females what engage
In awful Woman's Suffer-rage.

There corporations never steal
A franchise for a street-car deal,
And in that mild and temperate zone
Intoxication is unknown.

I love to sing o' that there town
Where cold injustice ne'er doth frown,
Where common coves like you and me
Ain't pestered by monopolee.

I love to think o' them there streets
Where street-car hogs ne'er block the seats,
Where folks ain't killed with pain intense
In otto-mo-bile accidents.

Oh, think o' that there blessed place,
All free from scandal and disgrace,
Where dogs and authors ne'er go mad,
And plays are never very bad!

Oh, fain would I be livin' there,
Where horrid billboards never glare,
Where actors never mention Art
And no one thinks that he is smart!

"Oh, why," ye ask, and right ye are,
"Has this Atlantis town afar
Been free from faults, and crimes, and tears,
For full ten thousand solid years?"

The answer what I give to you
Is jest as sad as it is true;
The folks what in Atlantis grow
All died ten thousand years ago.



The Breakfast Cap

By Hildegard Lavender

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

NOWADAYS, when I am asked to contribute to a settlement class in raffia work or in stenciling, and am told that my contribution may be the means of saving some girl from suicide or some boy from Sing Sing, I do not look superciliously upon the collector of funds, and tell her that I am better able to reason from cause to effect than all that.

I used to think that the grounds on which pleas were based were too absurd to be uttered in the presence of adults. How could a "country week" mean so much for the mental and spiritual regeneration of children as the earnest workers for country weeks pretended? How could any sane human being be expected to believe that a punching bag in an empty room might be the means of keeping some boy from entering the sometimes profitable profession of burglary? Why was one always asked to credit the miraculous power of trifles?

But now I am converted. There is no absurdity that may be uttered which I shall not, at least, take under consideration. They may tell me that a pair of knitting needles may save a soul, and I shall not put it beyond the power of the knitting needles. They may tell me that a judiciously be-

stowed tin spade and shovel may start a boy toward the Presidency, and I shall only nod my head sapiently and say that very likely it is so.

My conversion to a firm belief in the power of trifles was wrought by Gertrude's breakfast cap. Gertrude is a friend of my youth, and, of late years, looking upon her, I have been fearing that my youth was more remote than I cared to have it. Gertrude has been distinctly middle-aged for a decade at the very least. Sometimes I have tried to comfort myself by saying that Gertrude was born middle-aged, and that I really should not allow myself to be so depressed by manifestations which really were of her temperament and not of her years.

But it was in vain. When I had spent the afternoon with her in her neat, drab house, I always sped to the mirror the instant I reached home, and studied my face for crow's-feet, and parentheses, and that frightful "settled" look which is worse than any amount of white hair in proclaiming that youth has fled.

Gertrude was married when she was nineteen, and she had been an admirable wife and mother for twenty years. It's an aging profession, that of admirable wife



She gave up going about much, as soon as she had her first baby.



"Six dollars!" she cried to me. "Why, there isn't two dollars' worth of material in the things."

and mother. She gave up going about much, as soon as she had her first baby; when her last baby went to boarding school a year or two ago, she found that there was no wild, irresistible clamor on the part of the world outside her home to have her come and join in its diversions. You have to be a very exceptional person to retire into domesticity at twenty and be urged to emerge into society at forty.

Gertrude's John is a dear. He looks about the age of his oldest son. He has played golf every Sunday, and almost every Saturday, since the game was introduced into this country—and he looks like it. His eyes are bright, and his skin is tanned and ruddy, and his figure is light and buoyant. He is, of course, awfully fond of Gertrude and the children; at first he used to want her to play his nice, outdoor games with him, but of course she took her work indoors too seriously for that, and by and by he stopped asking her.

He has never neglected her, of course. If he has spent a good deal of

his spare time at our little country club, no one could blame him—a man cooped up in an office all the week needs a country club on holidays. And he would have been glad had she been willing to come with him.

Gertrude was perfectly contented. That was one of the things which aged her, I am sure. If she had been discontented, she would have done something, and doing anything outside the rut of one's daily duties is a great preservative of youthful spirit. But she was content—with her good-looking husband, and with his sound, wholesome, legitimate ways of amusing himself, with her children who were nice enough and quite like any one else's children, with her house which was dull and drab—they called it "neutral-toned" when she furnished it—and which has grown a little shabby in the course of years; with her cookery, which was not bad, but which was something thoroughly uninteresting and unexciting; with her dressmaker, who was an old frump, who began making

a dowager—a dowager of an American suburb type—out of her when she was twenty-five.

Well, when the last baby had gone to boarding school, Gertrude's friends rallied around her, and told her that she should have some new and attractive clothes, and that she should wake up generally. She smiled placidly, and said that it didn't matter what an old woman wore. Nobody laughed as we had all laughed when Gertrude first made that time-honored remark ten or fifteen years before; it wasn't a joke any longer.

So she continued to wear the same respectable, dowdy suits, the same respectable, dowdy hats—Gertrude patronized a milliner who could succeed in making a hat look like a bonnet tied with strings beneath a middle-aged tier of chins—and she continued to sit at home with her sewing, and her letters to the children, and her housework.

And John continued to go to sleep after dinner on the evenings when he did not run into some of the neighbors' houses for a little talk, or a little game, or a little bite of supper from a chafing dish.

And Gertrude accepted it all as placidly as she had accepted it for the last fifteen years. She knew that her John loved her, and the mere fact that he gave no active demonstration of the fact never worried her.

Some of the rest of us began to worry, though—and yet Mrs. Ives was really older than Gertrude, and John was a perfectly good husband. We were all quite sure that he would pull himself out of any semblance of a love affair the instant he realized that he was in it. Only it did seem a pity that he should ever have such a moment of realization—even of a delusion.

Well, one day Gertrude and I went in town shopping together. She was buying napkins, and she smiled a refusal upon my suggestion that she should leave them to be embroidered with her monogram.

"What's the use?" asked Gertrude. "I don't entertain much. And embroidered table linen would be out of

keeping with my plain old dining-room furniture."

"You might get some new dining-room furniture," I said, in a wild flight of fancy. "That black-walnut set of yours is hideous, with the scrolls, and the birds, and the cornucopias all over it."

"It will last out our time," answered Gertrude comfortably. "If Lois wants things changed when she comes home, why, I suppose we'll change them. But sufficient to the day—"

"Are you going to retire, abdicate, in favor of Lois as soon as she gets through school?" I demanded fiercely. "And then, when Margot gets through, are you going to do it again—for Lois will be married by that time? Haven't you an individuality of your own, a life of your own, a husband of your own?"

"Dear, you're always so excitable," said Gertrude, with the utmost placidity.

And she ordered the napkins without any monogramming. We turned, and threaded our way through the aisle—and then a bit of lace, a blue ribbon, and an absurd blue rosebud did what prayer and labor had been unable to accomplish. Gertrude paused in front of a case in which were displayed negligee caps. She fumbled for her glasses—she has been threatening to take to "specs" for some time, and I have been entreating her to adopt a lorgnette.

"What are those?" she asked.

I explained that it was now quite the thing for ladies to wear caps—caps for negligee, caps for breakfast, caps with tea gowns in the afternoon, caps of gold gauze and net for the theater.

"Aren't they sweet?" remarked Gertrude, looking longingly at them.

"Very pretty. Come along," I said. "We shan't be able to get the gloves and make the three-twenty if we don't hurry."

Naturally, I didn't suppose that Gertrude, who was talking about wearing her last summer's hat again with a new wreath of roses on it, would consider a lace cap for negligee. Did I not know, to my complete disapproval, that her

favor
comp
that
she
of f
"S
to m
ther
teria
houn
A

Wh
ter
upo
I
she
nee
tha
Cat
ma
unc
but
tho
T
run
in
to

favorite negligee wrapper was of uncompromising gray flannel—a fabric that ought to be abolished by law? But she stood there pricing the little pieces of frivolity.

"Six dollars!" she cried protestingly to me. "It's a ridiculous price. Why, there isn't two dollars' worth of material in the things, and there's not two hours' work."

And then she came to the glove coun-

up before my gratified eyes a little cap of white lace with blue rosebuds and blue bows.

"Are you sending it to Lois?" I asked.

Poor Gertrude looked abashed.

"I wasn't going to," she confessed.

"I—I know you'll think me an old fool, Hester, but the truth is I think it is too pretty for anything!"

"So do I," I admitted promptly.



When she appeared before him, in blue and white and lace and flowers, after twenty years of gray flannel.

ter with me, hooking back her glasses upon the gold ornament on her blouse.

Later she escaped me. She said that she had just remembered that Lois needed a larger size of underflannels than those with which she was supplied. Catching a glimpse of her afterward, I marveled that she should be buying undergarments at the ribbon counter, but I really gave the matter little thought.

Two or three days later, when I had run over to her house for something in the morning, she asked me, guiltily, to come into her room. There she held

"Have you—do you—wear them?" Gertrude pleaded with me for an affirmative answer.

"You know I'm a frivolous peacock," I answered. "Of course, I have one to match each of my negligees."

"That's the trouble," said Gertrude lugubriously. "It would look absurd with a gray flannel wrapper, wouldn't it?"

I assured her with all the emphasis of which I was capable that it would indeed look absurd in combination with her favorite lounging robe. And then I proceeded in my most tactful manner

—for I was scared to death lest the timid bird should be affrighted away from the net of the fowler—that there were adorable blue and white challies to be brought for a moderate price, if one didn't want to indulge in the extravagance of figured silks, and that challies washed well, and that they wore well. Oh, I used every argument that I thought likely to appeal to my sensible friend, Gertrude. But she interrupted me by saying, with her ravished eyes still upon the pretty little gaud she twirled upon her finger:

"I think I'll have a silk one."

And she did. I've often wondered what John said to her when she first appeared before him, in blue and white and lace and flowers, after twenty years of gray flannel.

"I'm having my room done over, Hester," announced Gertrude to me a short time after the episode of the cap. "To tell the truth, I either had to have it done over or to give up my adored cap; you know those caps were not made to wear in white-iron beds, in rooms papered in good, durable brown, with small, unostentatious dull-green figures."

So Gertrude was being done up in mahogany and lilac-and-bluebird chintz with a paper to match!

Of course, you perceive the rest of the story. The camel of vanity had managed to get his nose into Gertrude's tight little tent when she fell a victim to the lace and ribbon gewgaw for her head. It was not so very long before he was entirely in. Gertrude's dining room had to be done up to suit her breakfast gowns and caps; that meant the removal of the carved walnut and the substitution of graceful mahogany. Gertrude had never cared whether flowers were in her rooms or not; now she perceived that a row of potted primroses in the window of the dining room was absolutely demanded by her morning garb. And so on, and so on.

As for the surprised and delighted John, he went wooing again, and the only person who wasn't pleased by the results of the purchase of that absurd little cap was the fascinating man-eater of our suburb, Mrs. Ives.

And when I see Gertrude, in the triggest of short skirts and the most fetching of blouses, trying to learn to drive a golf ball off a tee under John's tuition, and growing pink and pretty in the effort, I feel that no one can ever again make any statement as to the powerful influence of trifles or the far-reaching effects of an entering wedge, which I shall not believe.



Will o' the Wisp

IN gardens live with tender light
The plighted lovers' laughter
Wakes echoes in the soft June night,
And silence follows after.

Hand clasped in hand, lip laid to lip,
They taste a joy undying
In deep and holy comradeship,
Supremely satisfying.

But he, on hopeless enterprise,
Is tricked of joy all human,
Whose passion fares with hungry eyes
In love with love—not woman.

CHAS. C. JONES.

THE GRAY MUFF



BY **MARIE MANNING**

Author of "Points on Europe," "The Banshee in Real Estate," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

WILLISTON wondered why this particular January afternoon in Washington brought back Rome so vividly. The weather undoubtedly presented certain climatic reminders—crisp sunshine, genial temperature, and the bluest of blue skies. But it was something infinitely more subtle than golden weather and pretty women driving about in open carriages that recalled Rome and the one little romance that made its brief transit through his life, and passed out of it utterly.

But to-day, for some unaccountable reason, it persisted in his consciousness; he could close his eyes and smell the very flowers that had adorned the altar at Trinità dé Monti that Sunday evening. And feel again the wonderful peace that had settled over the city with the day's decline.

It had happened long enough ago, in all conscience, to be quite forgotten, and to be exact Williston had not thought of it, but casually, in years; but to-day the weather, the sunshine, the unaccountable something brought it all back vividly, and with the memory a certain bitter-sweet savor. He hardly knew whether he was glad or sorry, and finally made up his mind that he was

experiencing fully that most unhappy form of nostalgia—homesickness at home.

Five years ago he had set up his easel in the Via Margutta, when Luck had begun to shower her favors thick and fast. But before those days of blithe adventure with fortune there had been the dark ages, oh, very dark ages, indeed, when he had drunk tea in his garret studio, in default of anything more substantial. His family had shown that exquisite delicacy about "prying into his affairs" that families sometimes show, when starvation may be more effectual than argument. They wanted him to be a banker, or maybe it was a lawyer, and what could bring him to his senses sooner than a continuous diet of "thé simple."

Whether they would have starved him into being a millionaire eventually is still a matter of conjecture, but—something happened—and that is the beginning of my tale.

On a certain day Williston, probably looking very much in need of it, was taken to lunch at the Caffé di Roma by his friend, Harrogate. Soup and fish had come and gone, and Dick, beginning to look about him, felt his glance drawn, then focused, then positively

riveted to an adjoining table by a girl such as a man does not have the luck of seeing every day.

She was one of the party of six: two officers—very splendid in gold lace and fierce mustaches; a chaperon, with white hair, and violets in her bonnet; a man in tweeds, English or American; another girl—splendid foil for the divinity. And firstly, lastly, and at all times—the girl herself. She could not have been more than twenty, and there were a hundred pictures in her. Williston could see them flame on the canvas, full of a delicious, impalpable femininity. The sort of picture in which every man would see his first love, and his last love, and perhaps a fancy or two, smiling at him between them.

The sheer joy of creation gripped him as he took note of a score of perfections. The modeling of the brows, the curve of the nostril, the crinkly brown hair that broke into the little, flamelike spurts of color where it rippled away from the mass. If he could only paint that girl he'd have the world by the throat! Besides— Oh, no, that was impossible! Absurd!

"Harrogate," said Williston solemnly, "do you believe in love at first sight?"

"Have a cutlet, do; some peas—potatoes are quite wonderful, done like this, with cheese. Er—what did you ask? Love at first sight? Oh, yes, I believe in it, in what the bookshops call the 'six best sellers.'"

"Then you don't believe in it?" Williston was neglecting his plate shamefully. "Perhaps when one experiences a sense of being utterly swept away, that in some former state—"

Harrogate was beginning to wonder if his friend's almost uninterrupted diet of "*thé simple*" was making him queer.

"Have some chianti, good for you," eagerly urged his host.

But the party at the table opposite was beginning to break up, and Williston had no thoughts for anything else. The girl was putting on her furs—gray, soft furs, that made her coloring, if possible, a shade more perfect. One of the officers handed her her muff—how Williston hated him!—and they were gone.

A thousand designs began to foment in the painter's head; he excused himself for a moment to his host, and went to the door. The entire party was settling itself in a big touring car; the man in tweeds gave the signal to the chauffeur, and it swung about and shot like an arrow up the street. The curve had been taken too abruptly, and the girl, who sat on the back seat, with one of the officers, dropped her muff. Dick picked it up, and started after the car; but, apparently, she did not notice her loss, for the car kept on. Williston had made something of a record at Yale as a sprinter, but that was before he had taken to tea as a steady diet. Still, he did not do badly, considering; he dodged between a wine dray and a donkey cart, he lost his hat, mud from passing vehicles splashed him, his tie slipped to his ear—still he ran.

Presently she missed her muff; the entire party turned to see the hatless, disheveled man tearing after them. Dick bowed, offered the muff—he had no breath to speak—and the officer sitting with the girl, taking him for an ordinary mendicant, crowded a couple of lire into his hand, and again the car sped on.

Then Dick ran as he had never run before, the rage beating at his brain lent Mercury's wings to his feet; the rest of the world faded to a blur, through which this motor eluded him—this motor in which sat a sleek, fat man, tricked out in brass buttons and braid. He reached the car somehow, shouted to the officer, who turned, and flung the coins squarely into his face.

The girl hung over the back of the car, her eyes full of chagrin. She held out her hands to Dick, as if to explain that she understood. Then Harrogate rattled up in a cab, into which he bundled his friend with nothing more consoling than "You idiot!" and ordered the driver down a side street. It was all over before the passers-by knew that it had happened.

Nevertheless, the Fates, so churlish in the matter of introduction, were to give him another chance. About a month later, in the warm February twilight,

Dick was returning from a Sunday stroll on the Pincio—for he loved his glimpse of life and of beauty enjoying her mazelike drive, for all his empty pockets.

As he neared the church of Trinità dé Monti, the high, sweet rush of women's voices poured out into the evening air. This particular church was an old haunt of Dick's, who sometimes went there to dine off the music and Volterra's masterpiece when times were very bad indeed. The beautiful vesper service was almost finished when he entered, candles burned softly in the dim twilight about the altar, and the air was reeking sweet with the earliest of spring blossoms.

The service seemed to have been something especial, for the church was overflowing with strangers, well-dressed *forestieri*, chiefly English and American; men in frock coats, women in furs and velvet, with here and there the glitter of an officer's uniform. The clear soprano voices of the nuns—like an invisible angel choir—made Dick's heart melt, and there, not a foot from him in the crowded aisle, knelt the girl.

He had been standing near the door, but when he saw her some instinct made him kneel, too. The blue spirals of incense turned to vapory unreality the suppliant congregation, the altar with its flickering tapers, the priest in his white-and-gold robes. They two alone in the world of prayer listening to the angel choir. It was her little flash of friendly recognition that made Dick's heart sing a more triumphant "Gloria" than the heavenly sweet voices back of the choir screen. A very paean of praise it sang for her, for God's beautiful world, for the joy of living, for youth to fight and win.

With the close of the benediction, the congregation had risen to its feet, and begun to pour into the loggia, and down

the steps. There was not a trace of coquetry in her manner, when, on finding Dick on the pavement beside her, she said: "Please let me thank you for all the trouble you took the other day. When he returned with thanks and explanations you had gone."

Dick smiled, speech never came readily to him at the best of times; now he could not find an articulate word.

"My aunt has gone into the convent to speak to one of the nuns. She'll be here in a moment, and will want to thank you, too."

Then Williston heard a strange voice coming from his own chest. It said, without a trace of visible perturbation: "One gets so little exercise in Rome, believe me, I am quite your debtor."



The entire party turned to see the hatless, disheveled man tearing after them.

V
1
4
—
2

N
O
V

1
1
XUM

But the memory of that picture—the hatless, disheveled, mud-bespattered man tearing after the motor, in a possible quest of exercise—was too much for them, and the laughter that is the freemasonry of youth overcame them both.

"One sees so little of that genuine kindness here—it was so like home—your not minding spoiling yourself to be of service."

"Why, they're all dancing masters for politeness here in Italy. I'm afraid their amiable contortions are beginning to bore you."

"Who was it that said life would be well without its diversions? That's the case of Rome with me. If they'd only let me prow about, and see the things I want to see—"

"But young ladies can't prow about Rome," said Dick, with quite a patriarchal air. "There are so many officers, soldiers, and other dignitaries upholding the government that there is no one left—or, rather, there are far too many, to look after the young ladies."

"It's better the way we do it at home; no military unless we need them for a war or a dance. Here the very streets are like boxes of soldiers."

And Dick thought to himself: "Ah, there's the rub! That cad that gave me the two lire is probably the count of something or other, and her aunt fancies a title, with gold braid and buttons on the side."

The tremulous spring air was fragrant and earthy with growing things; above them the sky had the late evening blue of the Mediterranean, and the stars winked there like lights reflected from many ships. The wonderful peace of the day's decline seemed to still the pulse of the city. The crowd had scattered—they were alone.

"I'm glad to have been able to thank you," she said. "There are times when it's a comfort to remember the ways of one's own people."

Dick's heart began to pound with a horrid apprehension—you must remember he was still in the mid-twenties, and this was the first girl in whom he had taken a romantic interest. Still, he

plucked up a desperate courage to say:

"You're not thinking of giving them up, I hope—the ways of your own people?"

Her eyes looked grave, as she answered:

"It's so hard when one is in the very camp of the enemy."

"I know what the trouble is," Williston blurted out, with boyish straightforwardness. "They want you to marry one of those foreigners! Don't do it." And he waved a hand, as if disposing of the entire affair.

"Ah," sighed the girl, "you don't know Aunt Charlotte."

"But I know you," insisted the young man, forgetting quite the brevity of the acquaintance.

But, even as he spoke, Fate was preparing to introduce the unknown quantity, in the shape of the aunt, who swept down upon her niece with all the panoply of purple violets and jingling bead adornment.

"Constance, I told you to wait for me in the chapel. Sister Angelica has delayed closing while we looked everywhere for you."

Then she saw that the shabby young man was her niece's companion, and she froze a little harder.

"Aunt Charlotte, this is the gentleman who was kind enough to bring me my muff the other day."

Aunt Charlotte bowed. Williston afterward remembered thinking that in all probability she reserved for the piano tuner that type of bow.

He retaliated with a salutation that could not be improved upon.

"My name is Williston—Richard Williston."

But the name, at that particular time, had no talismanic qualities for the older lady, who bore down upon her niece like a reliable but prosaic tug bent upon rescuing a fractious yacht from dangerous waters—and the episode was closed.

But Fate had not finished with her practical joking with these young people even yet. In a little while, Rome was at her loveliest; the rainy season was over, and the whole world was joyous—the

joyous exhilaration of laughter after tears. The orange blossoms hung, hauntingly sweet, over high-walled gardens; the terraces were emerald in the sunshine, and every fountain from the great Trevi to the showering sprays in dim old gardens sang merrily. The perpetual carnival of Rome—the motley wayfarers that pass and repass its picturesque streets—was the same; barefooted monks, soldiers, beggars displaying their scars, cavalry officers in long blue cloaks and clinking spurs, hawkers with hand carts of golden, green, and scarlet wares, penitents and tourists passing in and out of the greasy, leather curtains that screen the entrance of churches, models posing in the gaudy clothes of *contadini*, at the foot of the Spanish staircase.

And now and then, the tinkle of a little silver bell, as a priest, bearing the Host to the dying, would pass, in his robes, and the devout would kneel and cross themselves, and the tourists would take their noses from the red-backed Baedekers, and stare. It was Rome, with its golden sunlight and its purple shadows, and to be there was to be happy, even if one's studio was five flights up, and one had received, a week before, in answer to a small request from home, a cablegram that read:

All you want for business, but not a cent for art.

The studio in which Williston painted and lived was one of the very shabbiest in the quarter; good painters had begun there, but no one stayed a day longer than was necessary. Up the five flights of stairs, one heavenly spring morning, toiled an old woman, as brown and crisp and crinkled as an autumn leaf, and made the utterly astounding request that the Signorino Williston paint her portrait. The signorino, with masterly self-restraint, forebore from embracing the old lady on the spot; for a fleeting second or two he even managed to look uncertain, as if, perchance, his engagements might not permit of his painting her immediately. The old lady was an Italian, so it is unnecessary to say she

haggled—as well state that she breathed—but the price being finally agreed upon as five hundred lire, she departed, leaving a riotously happy young man behind her.

Of personal talk the Signora Risparmio had not a syllable, so that our young man's very human curiosity as to whom he had to thank for a recommendation as a portrait painter was destined to remain ungratified. She was undoubtedly a lady, but a lady that is born, bred, educated that other ladies may profit by her talents; one saw at a glance that the gray world of governesshood was her natural habitat.

In due time, the portrait was finished satisfactorily, and the little brown woman disappeared—taking it with her in a hired carriage—her exit as mysterious as her entrance. Williston hadn't an idea from what quarter of the compass his windfall had blown.

By means of it, however, he was able to make himself *convenable*, and pay a few, long-deferred visits, among them one to his old friend, the Contessa Vallicella, who, with a masterly blending of apparent opulence and thrift, inhabited a portion of a huge palace—the Palazzo Manfredi—which, with its grated windows, imposing porte-cochère, and Swiss in livery, made a very brave showing for what was, after all, only a glorified specimen of flat dwelling.

The contessa was in the garden, the opéra-bouffe functionary informed him, and conducted him thither. The garden lay full in the late afternoon sunshine—stretches of greensward, flowering beds that bloomed and bloomed, and cast their surplus petals in pink-and-white showers on the walks, alleys of shrubbery, marble benches moss-grown and ancient, even the crumbling statues—the gods that had had their day—borrowed a passing glow from the sunshine.

At the far end of the garden, under a striped awning, Williston saw three ladies. Two were elderly and dressed in black, but the third, in a pink frock and big, flowering garden hat, looked as if she might have wandered out of one of the blooming rose beds. Willis-



"Please let me thank you for all the trouble you took the other day."

ton had all he could do to preserve that outward insouciance that, as a very young man, he felt to be the hall mark of experience. He came near losing it for the best of reasons, for while he greeted his hostess, and replied to her raillery on his long absence, his eyes had met the young girl's, and his heart began to pound.

Then it stopped for a moment, while his mental machinery was busy with the miracle—for Miss Constance Brent, to whom he was presently making his best bow, was none other than the girl; and the lady with her his late sitter, the Signora Risparmio.

Here, then, was the explanation of his solitary subject of the one swallow, that, alas! had not made a summer. And while his heart beat faster with the knowledge of her delicately unobtru-

sive scheme to help him, yet he winced at the source of his patronage. That portrait that was to be the beginning of such great things had been in the nature of a tip—a tip for chasing a motor and restoring a gray muff.

Despite his idea of social calmness, Williston was blushing furiously. The girl had grown a little pale, but she acknowledged their previous acquaintance charmingly, and spoke of her indebtedness. Would they never have done with that interminable muff? He was beginning to dread the very mention of it. The old contessa added the last straw to his degradation by remembering that he took a childlike supply of sugar in his tea.

"Ah, my good Risparmio, you and I were both once young enough to like plenty of sugar; my gout has kept me from touching it these ten years."

Williston thought he detected a sly glimmer of amusement in the girl's eyes.

"No, no, thank you, contessa, I no longer take it at all," he protested.

"Keep your sweet tooth and your illusions as long as you can, my dear boy." And the dreadful old woman dangled a lump above his cup with the tongs. "Sweets and illusions are half the joy of youth."

But the young man, painfully solicitous to create the impression of no slight acquaintance with life, insisted upon the unsweetened draft, and sipped it without a grimace. Two monsignori, in black and purple, were then ushered in by the lesser of the attendants, and the contessa, who had a weakness for papal politics, sent the two young people off to gather flowers.

The rose in the girl's cheek grew a shade more sultry as she walked demurely beside him toward the lower garden. Dick, who held the shears, snipped at everything from pure nervousness; he longed—more than for eternal salvation—to acquit himself wittily, to trip her into confessing that it was she who had the portrait painted—Heavens, had she broken open her little bank to have it done!—and then, to emerge from the situation, Heaven only knew how, as a "man of the world."

To escape from the cocoon of boyhood, where he had been charged with the crime of having a sweet tooth, to the butterfly flight of a man of experience—that was the game; yet he could think of nothing worth saying, and his cheek was almost as red as her own.

The dreamy stillness of the sunny afternoon cast a peculiar spell; the mood in which he was all eager to shine passed, and left him strangely humble, and full of compassion for every one who was not loitering in an old garden with the girl. He even felt sorry for the crumbling statues—Pan that still piped bravely, though the ages had robbed him of a nose, dryads that had grown old and gray with waiting. They had had their day, poor things, just as he was having his.

"I didn't know till this afternoon that you were my patroness," he began, quite bravely.

"Please don't speak of it like that. Signora Risparmio had so good an account of your talents from one of her own countrymen—the sculptor below you—that it decided us both. The portrait is my act of reparation to her family, of whom I have robbed her for the last five years—she was my governess. Now she is our house friend, I think the Germans call it, and she is staying on with me till my aunt returns from Paris."

The aunt with the armor of jet and the gaze of Mont Blanc was in Paris. His heart seemed to turn a handspring at the news; now he had only to deal with people whose blood presumably circulated; human beings who did not maintain refrigerating plants beneath jet "mantillas," if that's what you called them. He would intercede with the temporary duenna to grant him the necessary permission to paint the girl, here in the fragrant old garden, where the fountain was a leaping rainbow, and she was the treasure that the fairies had hidden at its foot.

Then he'd give the girl the portrait, and—and— But the thoughts of Richard were leaping so far ahead of cold, human probabilities that it wouldn't be kind to give them.

But the miracle of it was, that it all came to pass. Signora Risparmio, as temporary duenna, "saw no objection," the contessa vouching so handsomely not only for Dick, but for his family to boot. So the picture that was to be his masterpiece, his "open sesame" to art and fortune, was actually begun under the happiest conditions.

The Brents had an apartment in the Palazzo Manfredi, and shared the garden with the Contessa Vallicella; and sometimes the contessa would invite them all to dinner, and after dinner the girl would sing adorably. And Dick, plotting and counterplotting for a word alone with her, would gently shove the contessa's lap dog through the window onto the terrace; and when "Fluff" would be missed he and Constance would be sent to find him. And then, perhaps, neither could remember very clearly what it was that had been so important to say. And they would linger for a moment in the shadow of the orange trees, and listen to the faint tinkle of the fountain, till Constance would remember the morsel of a dog, and run with him up the broad steps, with Dick begging for just another moment.

Oh, it was all very simple, childish, if you please; but when the milestone of twenty is not far behind, and one is in Rome in the spring, and there is the added romance of an old garden, all the trifles are important and delightful.

And then, one day, the serpent entered this second Eden, if it is not highly disrespectful to imply that a lady with purple violets in her bonnet, and more terrifying jet armor—direct from Paris—should take the place, even figuratively speaking, of a serpent.

The girl was sitting in a low chair, and Dick was painting industriously; the contessa and Signora Risparmio, beneath the striped awning at the end of the garden, constituted what might be called a double escort of long-distance chaperons.

The first warning was the indignant rattle of jet, as Mrs. Brent recognized in the portrait painter the shabby young man of the muff episode and the Trinità dé Monti vesper service. She lost her

temper, and, like very angry people, seemed to rejoice in her loss; the good Risparmio was given notice on the spot, the contessa was reproved, the girl was ordered indoors, and Dick branded as an adventurer, who sought the confidence of a foolish girl for sordid reasons. And in a very few moments the irate lady had the garden pretty much to herself; not absolutely, however, for the contessa waited for a word.

"Caro Dio, madame, you have made, as your country people say, 'the fat in the fire.' The shabby Signorino Weeliston he paint, madame, he can afford to paint—his father is what you call The Standard Oil. His mother, she that Madame Weeliston you meet two year ago at Venice, when she entertain the queen on her yacht. You make a mistake terrible when you call the signorino a adventurer."

Then the all-too-vigilant aunt had her bad quarter of an hour; she could not write and apologize to the son of a rich man for the things she had said in good faith to the son of one apparently poor. It was a situation not to be improved by explanation; furthermore, it had certain elements that made it too good to keep; the contessa was but human—in another week it would be all over Rome. So Mrs. Brent gave the order for her trunks to be packed, and hastily departed with her beautiful niece for Switzerland. And Fate had apparently written "Finis" this time in earnest.

In after years, Williston always felt

that he painted the picture to get rid of his phantom model. Whether it was that after the girl departed times grew worse, meals less frequent, and tea took their place with more monotonous regularity, and he, utterly heartsick, began to think that his father would succeed in starving him into being a millionaire, after all—whether it was any, or all of these things, it is difficult to say, but, turn where he would, he was always

seeing, in imagination, the girl as he had first seen her in the soft gray furs.

She was his spirit-guest in the damp, empty studio, encouraging him to work, work, and not to give up the fight. She glided beside him in the sunlight, she drew him into galleries, and pointed out great pictures that had been painted under greater difficulties. And her eyes were always full of victory, and her voice, as she urged him not to give up, had something of the triumphal ring of the "Gloria" that they had heard together at Trinità dé Monti.

You remember the picture—or some of the stolen variations on the theme. Dick sold it to a dealer, who in turn sold it to a man whose little private whim in pictures is something of an international affair. Then the art journals began to publish reproductions of it; ladies who fancied they resembled the original had themselves painted in gray furs; soap and chocolate people copied it for advertising purposes as nearly as they dared. Williston awoke to find his estate more



The signorino, with masterly self-restraint, forbore from embracing the old lady on the spot.

unhappy than famous; he was popular, and then, of course, his family relented and couldn't do enough for him. But of Mrs. Charlotte Quinton Brent and her niece, Constance, he never heard another word—the great playground of Europe closed over them completely. These things had happened the better part of ten years ago. And now, he had come to Washington to paint a Presidential portrait. And yes, undeniably there was a feeling of Rome in this Washington atmosphere. But—why this vivid impression of the girl after all these years? That wasn't due to climatic influence, but in its own way it was very precious, and Williston declined to spoil it with analysis.

He had left his hotel to pay a duty call on his cousin, the Countess Du Deschanel, whose husband was first secretary to one of the Latin country embassies. Williston had never met her, but his mother's parting injunction in New York had been to call on her. He consulted a card that bore the countess' address, and turned into a broad street, which, after the first influx of opulence, however, presented a gradual diminuendo in the scale of prosperity. The liveried footman had been replaced by the smart maid, and a few blocks beyond the maid was beginning to lose her smartness, and reappear as "the hired girl."

He quickened his steps in the real spirit of adventure. There was a succession of vacant lots, and on a corner beyond stood an old yellow house, perched high on a terrace.

That the yellow house had "seen better days" was evident at a glance. There were beautiful, wrought-iron lamps at either side of the suavely inviting steps, some really fine woodwork about the inner door of the vestibule. A high wall tapestried in ivy inclosed a considerable garden. The number on the card corresponded with the number on the house. His ring was answered by an old negro, who inclined his head, with that unctuous delight in serving that only an old slave can convey.

"Yes, sah—she's home, sah," he said.

His deafness prevented his hearing

Williston's inquiry, but why should a gentleman present himself at that hour except to call on his young mistress. And he showed the way to the drawing-room.

The room had a variety of faded hangings and tapestry, wonderful old mahogany—some rare portraits, a Kneller and Raeburn among them. Then a lady entered, with the friendliest of smiles, and said: "I was expecting you." And the lady was the greatest surprise of all.

Dick stared stupidly, for the lady had crinkly brown hair, that broke into little flamelike spurts of color where it rippled away from the mass, and the modeling of the brows and the curve of nostril were the same; he knew every line of her face, for all the years that had passed.

She still stood tentatively, a fervent sweetness in her eyes as she lifted them to his. But all he could think of was: "She is not the Countess Du Deschanel; she is the girl! The girl!" And these two words kept repeating themselves with a rhythmic reiteration till Dick's head reeled. But to save his soul he couldn't say a word. The girl had imperceptibly diminished the distance between them, but his demon of stupidity would not relax its hold.

"It's wonderfully like Roman weather," he blurted out finally, and he was hard put to it to say even that.

Then the tide turned, and the atmosphere, that had been so perilously near to midsummer madness, changed in a flash.

"Won't you leave us even our poor weather? We've practically nothing else left that's distinctly national. Travel has robbed us even of our accent——"

"Oh, has it? I fancied I heard it in Rome quite lately. The owners still proudly flag themselves."

"I had no idea that you were such a bad American. Where is your patriotism? Where is the something that should have risen in your breast at the sound of that accent and the sight of that flag? Have you forgotten that stalwart band of our childhood, named in your honor 'The Georgie Vaughan

Guards, that lightly talked of humbling England for the third time?"

Heavens! She hadn't recognized him, after all; she had taken him for some Georgie Vaughan, a wretched little boy with whom she had played soldiers.

"You misjudge me," he said. "I'm far too good an American to enjoy seeing the flag pinned to a tourist's ulster." And to himself: "She's forgotten me, utterly forgotten me!"

He continued to writhe under the mantle of the dread soldier boy. What if he should come now, while they were talking? But the simple platitude of all being fair in love and war carried the day. He had set out in perfectly good faith to call on his cousin, the Countess Du Deschanel; instead, through some Heaven-sent blunder, he had found the girl for whom he had been looking for years. True, she had taken him for some one else, but he was going to have his call out. By Jove, like the fellow in Browning's "Last Ride": "Who knows but the world may end to-night."

The old negro who had admitted him brought in the tea tray.

"What did you do with the white mice?" she asked irrelevantly.

What, indeed, had he done with the white mice? Here was no simple equation, soluble in the head.

"Surely you've not forgotten them—Juanita, Horace, and Alfred! See, I remember all their names."

"Oh, Juanita died," he at length felt safe in declaring.

"Presumably they're all dead, since that was quite twenty years ago, but I hoped for a few——"

"Last sad details? Well, Horace and Alfred they died, too. I—er—buried them. They—were conscious to the end—er—seemed resigned."

"The best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley," she quoted, Williston fancied not without a trace of intention. At all events, he made up his mind to confess—his reputation as a painter must count for something, and he could present reams of credentials.

"It's better so," he said. "Had not my plans miscarried, I should at this

very moment be calling on a relative who——"

"Then I was an afterthought?" Her eyebrows queried.

Williston was on his feet in a second. "No, no," he protested eagerly, "you are Fate."

Then the unexpected happened. It was nothing more unusual than the prolonged ringing of the doorbell, but it served its full purpose of bringing Williston back to earth with a bound. The demons of misgiving and doubt closed upon him—the servant was opening the door to a visitor, but not the dreaded Georgie Vaughan. Williston knew her from the innumerable photographs owned and prominently displayed by all the women of his family as his star relative, the Countess Du Deschanel.

His one thought was to escape from the dim drawing-room, where the lights had not been lit, before he could be introduced as "Mr. Vaughan." Considering his state of mind, the exit he managed to accomplish under the circumstances was not at all bad.

At the door, a carriage was waiting.

"Here," said Williston to himself, "is where we discover whether we are a second Alice in Wonderland, or whether we are just coming down with common or garden brain fever."

"Can you tell me," he inquired of the footman who was waiting with a wrap on the sidewalk, "who lives in that house?"

The man looked at him for a moment, thinking he must be a suspicious character, for inquiring the name of the occupants of a house where he had been presumably making a call. Then, remembering, the liveried one grinned:

"Got 'em mixed, did you, sir? Well, it ain't the first time. The countess and Miss Brent both has the same number, same street, but one is Northwest—that's the countess; Miss Brent is Northeast. This is the old part of the town; the Brent house is above a hundred years old, sir."

The footman wondered at the size of his tip, also why the strange young man neither went back to the house, nor continued on his way, but stood opposite

the steps, gazing. The last he saw of him was some ten minutes later, when he turned the corner on the box, and the strange young man was running across the street, and frantically pulling the bell.

She came in answer to his request a moment later. She looked very lovely—but where, oh, where, was the gracious lady that in all their haphazard meetings had been so kind? There was nothing oncoming in her attitude.

"How do you do?" her lips said charmingly, but the slightly raised eyebrows intimated that perhaps it might be as well to state his errand definitely.

But Dick's eleventh-hour courage had set. He had been intimidated, perturbed, terrified, dismayed so long by the strange circumstances in which he was continually finding himself placed with the girl, that doubtless his brain had begun to produce, in response to the demand, some cell whose province it was to manage the unusual gracefully.

"Yes," he fairly pelted at her, "I know I drank the other man's tea, and pretended to know white mice that I'd never heard of. But please don't look at me like that." He made a rapid circuit of the drawing-room, and came back to her. "Words have never been my medium. For the first time I seem to have enough of them to explain some of the strange positions in which I'm continually being placed since I first saw you in the Caffé di Roma. So again I beg of you, don't look at me like that, and scare away my temporary working vocabulary. Or some one will be coming in and calling me Queen Elizabeth, or The Grand Lama of Tibet, and that'll be another thing savoring of false pretenses."

"I was beginning to take you for the only and original Lohengrin," she mocked, smiling.

"I can't help it if you took me for that chap whose tea I drank. I went in

perfectly good faith to call on my cousin, and I found you, you, you! Can you blame me for being rattled—drinking vicarious tea? Why, girl, I would have drunk hemlock!" He took her hand, led her to the old-fashioned mirror, with the wax candles burning at either side. "Tell me," he pleaded, "doesn't the end justify the means?"

The old smile that he knew was beginning to creep about the corners of her mouth.

"But why didn't you tell me at once? I knew you immediately. In fact, I expected you to call—Louise Du Deschanel had insisted she would send you with a letter of introduction. Every one knows you plagiarized my portrait, every one knows about Aunt Charlotte, every one knows everything."

"Then, if you knew me, why did you greet me as this fellow, Vaughan?"

"Can't you understand how maddening it was, after all these years—my portrait—the motor episode—everything? To simply have you stand and stare! I made up Georgie Vaughan on the spot; he's only brother to Mrs. Harris."

Dick wondered how long his courage would hold out. It was with him yet, but was it wise to take further chances?

"It may sound very abrupt," he said, "but will you marry me?"

"Yes—that is—I mean it does sound very abrupt, but why do you want to marry me?"

"As your fiancé, I may have some control over these pranks it has pleased Fate to play. For instance, if you disappear to-night, I shall probably have your address. If I go to call on a cousin, my hostess will probably turn out to be a cousin. You see, there are innumerable weighty reasons. Besides, I'm dying to do another portrait. And finally, I'm dreadfully in love."

"I could never contend against such an array of reasons," she answered.





ILLUSTRATED BY H. HAYGARTH LEONARD

HAD Fanny been given to speculation upon the problems of heredity, she must, perforce, have pondered often upon the freak of blood that made her two children, Kate and William, temperamentally the offspring of their father's race alone. But had her later years found her capable of more than a blind, inarticulate bewilderment in the face of the fact, her youth would probably have possessed sufficient psychological discernment to prevent her from marrying William Shoemaker, Senior, and thus her children's utter unlikeness to herself would never have baffled her, like the page of a book printed in characters all unknown. As the matter stood, Fanny thought very little about the workings of her own nature, and never knew the exquisite satisfaction of tracing its unlikeness to those natures by which she was surrounded.

William, her husband, had been much her senior, a grizzled, robust fifty to her slight, rosy twenty when he had married her. That was thirty years ago. She had accepted him willingly and gratefully enough—it was not, as the aunt, with whom she had lived since her coming out from England, sapiently if unoriginally pointed out, for beggars to be choosers. And romance had never knocked at the door of Fanny's heart to teach her the difference between true love's method of approach and that of William. That he, "the captain," for he was a veteran of the Civil War, should stoop to her, orphaned, shy, unnoticeable for beauty except to such

eyes as search among dun leaves for the first arbutus, was matter for thanksgiving. Fanny thankfully walked to the altar with him, and thankfully walked to the "four-family house" near the mill where he worked in Smalley's Flats, and thankfully set out to be a good wife according to her ancient, uninstructed lights.

From that day until the day when, a thin, wistful, shy little woman of fifty, with a sort of withered girlishness on her face, she had looked down upon the marble rigidity of his old features set in death, she had never known what it was to give spontaneous expression to any impulse of her gentle nature.

She had always dwelt within sight and sound of the gaunt mills, set on reclaimed marshland opposite the great city; even when the twins were little, they never shared her dreamy eagerness for the countryside, preferring, like their father, the populous life of the court. She had cooked, and washed, and scrubbed, and sewed, and a few geraniums, laboriously coaxed to bloom along the sills of her dull windows, represented all the poetry of her life.

Nor had it ever occurred to her to repine, or to think in any way about the starved needs of her spirit. She knew, with a degree of decent pride, that she had an uncommonly good husband; never was she forced to invent tales to account for bruises, as was the habit of less fortunate neighbors; never did she sit alone, listening with the full heart of fear, for the shamble of

drunken footsteps. She knew herself for a lucky woman.

The neighbors said, with apparent judgment, that she was likely to be a luckier woman yet—had there ever been a greater hand to screw and save than the captain? Would he not leave his widow rich? They erred only in naming the beneficiary of his thrift and shrewdness. Having taken, during his lifetime, no more thought for his wife than for the kitchen stove, which also served him well and had cost him little, the captain was not guilty at the end of his days of the weak-mindedness of leaving her his holdings—his lots in a little suburb, his savings-bank account.

It was not because he consciously loved his children that he bequeathed to them all he possessed save such dower rights as a sentimental law claimed for his widow. It was because he loved his little, accumulated property, and knew that to the two children, bone of his bone, it would be the same object of endeavor and sacrifice as it had been to himself.

To any one knowing the Shoemaker blood, it was a foregone conclusion that the children should soon persuade their mother to surrender to them such slender hold as she possessed upon her husband's estate.

"What does she need of it?" Kate asked William, or William asked Kate. They were entirely harmonious at this stage of their filial conference. "She'll have no expenses of her own. She'll live with one of us."

And then a little discord began to sound in the duet. Kate called William's attention to the fact that she was forced to harbor a mother-in-law, and that there would be scant room in her home for a mother as well, while William bespoke Kate's notice that he had three children to her one. But to Fanny, stranded, alone, and bewildered, upon the shores of a new life, they did not mention the narrowness of their respective dwellings until her grasp upon her husband's hard-won, tiny wealth had been legally loosed. Then she began to discover how crowded the rooms of another's house, how steep the stairs.

Her old captain, thumping about the sordid court where she had lived with him so long, assumed in her recollection the stature and the mien of a beneficent angel, and the dingy tenement her labors had made habitable grew the radiant dwelling place of peace and honor. If he had not taken her into his own life, at least the captain had left her the dignity of undictated action in her own sphere. In her children's homes it was vastly different.

And then suddenly she remembered that she was a pensioner upon the bounty of the government. She remembered the captain's quarterly visits to a notary, his early morning descents upon the pension agency in the big city across the river, his triumphant return. She had never laid finger upon that store of gold; always it had gone straight into the savings bank, into the fund for the lots. And this was now hers—hers and no other's. The law recognized no claim of adult children upon it. It was all her own. It would be the first money she had ever handled in all her life with the delicious, happy sense of ownership.

She was "visiting" Kate when the first quarterly payment fell due. For a few days before, she had lived in dread lest either of her shrewd children should recall this individual fortune of hers. She knew they would never let her have it. But by some miracle, they both forgot it.

Early on the appointed morning, she took with her to the notary two neighbors, old women full of the importance of secretiveness. Afterward she journeyed, as the old captain had always done, across the river to the agency, and after long waiting, and much bewilderment, she had clutched in her happy fingers the crisp, greenish-white check for sixty dollars.

The blood beat against her ears at the magnitude of her accomplishment. Yet—what could she do with the crisp check? No one would change it into money—spendable money—for her. She approached a clerk with her troubled story. Old men, wearing slouch hats and Grand Army buttons, leaning,



She approached a clerk with her troubled story.

some of them, on canes or crutches, hearkened to her. A half dozen volunteered to have it cashed for her; there was a saloon at the corner which made a specialty of cashing pension checks.

And so Fanny Shoemaker, nervous little widow of fifty, stood trembling outside Bartel's obliging resort on the corner until four old gentlemen had slaked their thirst at her expense, and one of them returned to her with fifty-nine and a half dollars, which he counted conspicuously into her keeping. She had begun to fear the money gone forever before he arrived, and she fairly sobbed her gratitude when her little black bag was crammed with the unbelievable wealth.

And then she went forth to buy, with the first money she had ever possessed in her own right, exactly what she wanted—a dress for Kate, a doll and doll carriage for Kate's girl, an express wagon for William's boys, a green plush chair for William's parlor, a muff

for herself, two potted primroses for the room she shared with Kate's daughter; even a gift for Kate's churlish mother-in-law, who had, that very morning, eyed askance her three lumps of sugar in each of her two cups of coffee. Her spirit soared aloft above the shopping crowds, and her heart sang hosannas. After all, money was a beautiful, shining, joyous thing—she no longer wondered that the captain and his children cared so mightily for it.

Not until her face was again set toward Smalley's Flats did she feel any misgivings as to her course. Then she bethought herself. What would Kate and William say to her?

What they did say to her was, in the language of the flippant, "a-plenty." She had shown herself, as they vigorously pointed out, not only foolish in expenditure, but dishonest in intention. Had it not occurred to her that it would become her to pay her board? Had she no desire not to be a burden upon hard-

working young couples with their way to make in the world?

Poor little Fanny, to whom tears had been as unfamiliar as laughter, all emotions having passed her by, wept that night upon her pillow with mingled mortification and bewilderment. For surely the money was all her own. And surely what she had surrendered of dower rights, and what services she was able to perform in the households, would amply pay her board.

After that one brief taste of rapturous independence, that one delirious draft of extravagance, Fanny's pension money was always taken in charge by her careful children, passing into the immediate keeping of whichever one of them happened to be the mother's host at the time of its receipt. And it became a matter of hot rivalry between them to see which could most often harbor Fanny at the golden period of the quarter, and which could most successfully avoid harboring her at all other periods.

No tact mingled with their tyranny, and it is a tactless tyranny that turns slaves into rebels. Fanny came to know, with poignant accuracy, the ground of her brief welcome in each of her children's homes; and she could foretell, to an hour, the limit set upon their cordiality.

Resentment smoldered beneath vague pain and puzzlement in her heart. Was not the money her own? Moreover, she had once drunk of the intoxicating draft of financial independence. She

hugged to her breast the remembrance of that first pension payment of her widowhood. She recalled with benedictions the old men who had cashed her check for her in Bartel's saloon. Recalling them, she, the timorous, shy soul, who dared not utter any faint protest to her all-powerful children, grew bold and adventurous—how kind strangers were, how slight the perils of the world!

During the two months and two

weeks of each quarterly division of the year when it was not considered worth while in William's home or in Kate's to be polite to Fanny, she had always patiently to await her turn at the daily paper. Even the children came before her, And, being obliged to attend upon the pleasure of so many for the privilege of reading the day's happenings, she took to saving scraps of alien newspapers—the pages from Richmond, in which the little Virginia seamstress sent home William's



On the fourth day, she received a missive postmarked "Hillboro."

wife's dress; the ragged half sheet from Vermont, in which a New England neighbor had returned a borrowing of tea to Kate; a loan, by the way, which Kate's thriftless mother had taken upon herself to make during the young matron's absence, and to her great indignation.

Kate and William used sometimes to glance at their mother with a comfortable, half-contemptuous amusement as she pored over the stale gossip of remote places in which she knew no one. It destroyed any slight compunction

they might have felt at withholding the more stirring intelligence of the great city from her to mark how she was able to absorb herself in this driftwood of news.

It was in the Vermont paper that she saw the advertisement which was to change her destiny. Her ears were still tingling with Kate's "cheap stuff—not like what she borrowed," which had been her daughter's reply when she had triumphantly called her attention to the restoration of the tea. A little mist blurred the paragraphs; dull, quiet tears were no strangers to Fanny's eyes in these days. She stared hard at the paper to hide her mortification. And gradually the words took shape before her.

A bachelor, American, fifty-eight, with good farm, ten acres tillable, fifteen pasture, twenty-five wooded, six-room house, three cows, two horses, chickens, pigs, et cetera; also a pension, Spanish War veteran; wants to correspond with a suitable widow or maiden lady. Object matrimony. Has lived in his town all his life, and can refer to any one for testimony about soberness, honesty, and kindness to man and beast. No agents. Please address D. W., Hillboro, Vt.

It was the word "pension" that had focused Fanny's misty glance upon the paragraph. She read it a second time. A remembrance that had lain buried beneath three decades of dull forgetfulness stirred into life—the thatched roof of a little plaster cottage to whose walls roses clung, the bosky green of a common where her father's cow had grazed. She recalled the good beast's name, "Nellie," and sighed. She wondered what D. W. called his cows.

The next day she overheard William and Kate quarreling as to which one should have the spending of the next pension check. It would, so it appeared, pay the premium on William's life-insurance policy, or the taxes on Kate's husband's new suburban lots. Fanny thought enviously of D. W. "Also a pension." Being a bachelor, he was not obliged to surrender his grateful country's quarterly expression of its gratitude to any children. Happy D. W.!

And then it was that a daring thought flashed into her mind. D. W.'s object

was matrimony. D. W. wanted to enter into correspondence with a suitable-aged widow or maiden lady—all his township would vouch for his goodness. How kind those other old pensioners had been to her on the one day of her freedom! What kind hearts beat beneath the army blue! A sudden hope of deliverance glowed in Fanny's eyes.

How often it glowed, how often faded, before she took her final resolve, probably not even she could compute; but at last she took it. One night—darkness, she felt, befitted such a deed—her icy hands dropped into the letter box at the corner a missive to D. W., of Hillboro, Vermont. It bade him address F. S., General Delivery, Smalley's Flats, Long Island, New York. Fanny had learned of the utility of "General Delivery" from William, who had forbidden his wife to give a more definite address to a ne'er-do-well brother of a borrowing propensity.

Then she waited, full of fears—fears that D. W. had long since been snatched from her by competitors earlier in the field. It was such an old paper that wrapped the tea; fears that he had not been, fears that he would never answer, that he would answer, that he was a maniac, that he was one of those bigamous, murderous characters of whom she sometimes read in the newspapers when Kate and William were through with them—men who married guileless women for their savings, and who promptly rid themselves of the human encumbrances of wealth by the simple expedients of desertion or assassination.

She haunted the post office of Smalley's Flats almost from the moment when she dropped her daring letter into the letter box. On the fourth day, she received a missive postmarked "Hillboro," and made a ball of it, and sought through all the settlement for a hiding place in which she might read it. Suppose that he had refused her! Suppose that he had accepted her!

As a matter of fact, D. W. had done neither. He merely informed her that her letter, arriving after the deluge of

replies which had inundated him immediately upon the appearance of his advertisement, had found him in a better condition to appreciate its contents. Out of the first lot of answers he confessed himself as little able to make choice as he would have been had all the women in the world been gathered together for his bewilderment. In her case it was otherwise. He explained his bachelorhood as the result of shyness.

I never could seem to make up my mind to ask any young lady that I knew; but a business proposition, like what I can make to a strange lady, is another thing; and a strange lady is different. If, after we have written back and forth for a while, she don't like me or I don't like her, there's no harm done and no hard feelings, like when you have to sit behind her in church the next Sunday.

He wanted no money apparently, but he would like to see a picture of her. And that she might know what manner of man he was, he inclosed one of himself; also one of the farmhouse, and also two guarantees of his good character from the president of the bank in the county seat and from the village clergyman. Both declared Daniel Watts to be an upright citizen, a good friend and neighbor, and hinted that a certain originality in his make-up had never interfered with the proper performance of all his duties.

The correspondence proceeded. Guilt and excitement hung red banners on Fanny's cheeks; but no one was interested in her complexion, so they passed unnoticed. Kate did arouse herself one day to remark: "Laws, ma, are you crimpin' your hair at your age?" but made no further comment.



Her eyes encountered a yellow daffodil upon the person of a tall, ruddy man.

The last two weeks of the second quarter of her acquaintance with D. W. arrived. Fanny declined Kate's pressing invitation to come to her house. She smiled faintly at William's genial assurance that his home was hers, and that this constant traspin' back and forth was all nonsense.

And on the fateful day when the New York pension agency bestows upon its beneficiaries its quarterly stipend, she was out at a convenient pension notary's before William's household was awake; and from that moment her movements were so rapid that by the time William and Kate, reunited in the fraternal bond of a common dread, had reached the pension agency at noon, Fanny was safely on her way to Boston, where D. W. was to find her. She wore a yellow daffodil in her shabby coat, and he would also be wearing one, lest her frightened eyes should not recognize him from his photograph when, upon the appointed bench in the Common, they should meet.

There would be, as Fanny knew, an hour to wait before D. W.'s train from

Vermont could land him at his station and he could make his way to the bench. She sat in the soft, delusive, spring sunshine a while, her heart beating a little unevenly against her old black coat. By and by nervousness and a little wind from the east sent shivers up and down her back. She marked with her eye the area between two gates which she felt she might safely patrol to the improvement of her circulation, and without the loss of her bearings.

And walking up and down, her eyes fell upon a monument of bronze. She stopped before it with a little gasp. A soldier, young, austere, noble, rode at the head of a troop of dark followers, from whose broad faces the dull, wondering look of aliens had never faded.

Fanny stood and stared at the Shaw monument. Misty tears began to cloud her eyes, something throbbed at her throat. She went back to her bench and dropped the veil—black, unmeet for a bride—over her face.

She remembered poignantly—as though she had loved him—her old captain marching in a Decoration Day parade at the head of his post. She remembered William, a chubby child, tugging at her hand and dancing with joy as he recognized his father, while Kate smiled superciliously upon playmates with no such parental source of pride. She herself, Fanny, had been proud that day.

Memories crowded upon her in a tender surge—the long years of neighborly living, the well-known ways. Was it for her, the old captain's widow, to be keeping such an appointment as this—with an unknown man? Was it for her to be marrying from a page in the pa-

per, as she would buy a pound of tea? What if her children had repressed her, had robbed her of her little independence, her tiny, generous pleasures? Should not the captain's widow have known how to assert herself?

She pushed up her veil to mark the trail by which she had come hither; she must get back—she must hurry. And, leaping to her feet in her new-taken resolution, her eyes encountered a yellow daffodil upon the person of a tall, ruddy man, who smiled kindly upon her as he saw the token on her breast.

Fanny broke into speech, an incoherent jumble of shame, apology, a recital of old dignities and new determinations. It ended in a breathless mingling of appeal and defiance.

"I'm goin' back—I was crazy—I'm goin' back! Oh, what shall I tell them? An' you—you've come so far—it's cost so much! But I can't help it—I'm goin' back!"

"You shall go back, marm, if you want to," declared D. W. resonantly, reassuringly. "An' what you can tell those children of yours is that I'm goin' to follow you. I callate it would be more seemly, at our age, with you a captain's widow, an' all. Now don't you go to lookin' scared—I ain't holdin' you to a thing, not to a thing. I'm just goin' to head you for home now, since that seems right to you, an' then I'm comin' courtin', proper an' orderly."

A belated fire of coquetry shone through the panic and confusion of Fanny's misty gaze.

"Well," she conceded waveringly. "Mind, I ain't promisin' anything, but I shall be pleased to see you if you call!"



THE SAME MAN

By Charles Battell Loomis

YES, I remember Rockingham Street. One of those Connecticut hill towns. I went up there in one of the first cars that ever climbed so steep a grade, and when I reached the level, and began to let her out, supposing it was the jumping-off place, with no human beings you could call such within a mile or two, a tall, gaunt, black-haired figure loomed up in the middle of the road. I blew my horn, but he never budged, and finally I had to slow down, and eventually come to a dead stop.

"Then this old hayseed told me, in language plentifully peppered with picturesque oaths, that if we automobilists thought we were going to own Rockingham Street, the way we owned the rest of Connecticut, we were eternally mistaken, and if I ever went through there again at such a gait, and little children playing around that had never heard of an automobile, let alone seen one, he'd fill my tires so full of lead there wouldn't be power enough in my motor to move the car, 'on accaount of the heft of it.' Yes, I remember Rockingham Street, and I'll never forget him. So you spend your summers up there? Fine, breezy place. Must be good for kids."

"You ran up against Deacon Pepperidge," said I, laughing. "He'd have done what he said he would if you had ever broken his speed law again. Queer old character!"

It occurred to me after I had left my motoring friend—we had been talking together in a seaside hotel, at which we were spending a few days—that I'd like to get a few more opinions of the late Deacon Pepperidge; and when I returned to my wind-kissed home among the clouds I asked various neighbors to tell me what manner of man the deacon had been.

The first man I asked was a "summer resident"—a typical one. I spend my own summers in Rockingham Street, but my ancestors were born there, and to me it is more or less home, even if I do live out on Long Island nine months in the year; and my neighbors are my friends.

"Deacon Pepperidge? Deacon Pepperidge? Well, really, I don't seem to place him. Lived up here winter and summer?"

"Yes," said I; "born here, and four generations before him."

"Oh, that accounts for it. You see, I never have any intercourse with the 'natives.' Naturally wouldn't. They

move in a different sphere. I mind my business, and I will say they generally mind theirs; but I have never found anything interesting in the rural type, boots smelling of fertilizer, and all that sort of thing. Necessary people—very; but they don't appeal to me."

"Why, Deacon Pepperidge lived not a quarter of a mile south of you. Red-faced man, with hair dyed black, humorous eyes, hat always tilted on the back of his head, and a look of independence on his face that the czar of Russia couldn't have eliminated."

"Yes, now you describe him, I do remember the feller. Made a great fuss because I knocked a child over, quite accidentally, while trying a new machine. Child wasn't hurt; but the way this man went on, you might have thought it was murdered. Some little village child—not even his. Meddling in what didn't concern him. I finally told him I wasn't used to being talked to that way by farmers; and, tossing the child a five-dollar bill, I drove on. Yes, I remember him. So he's dead? Well, I suppose some one was sorry, but I shan't go into mourning myself. I say, I shan't go into mourning myself."

And my neighbor laughed as if he had made a very good joke.

The next person who talked about the character of Deacon Pepperidge was Norah Hanrahan. Michael Hanrahan came to Rockingham Street thirty years ago, and was the first "foreigner" to "intrude" among the Yankee inhabitants, who had lived there since the early part of the eighteenth century.

Hanrahan had proved a decent sort of Irishman, and had succeeded where Abijah Taintor had let the farm go to rack and ruin; and, now that Michael had been gathered to his fathers, Norah ran the farm, with the help of two sturdy sons.

"Did I know Deacon Pepperidge? Sure, there's no wan on the street knew him better—Heaven rest his soul! Sure, it's manny a time he's stopped here for a glass of har-rd cider, his wife bein' a temperance woman, an' he goin' without, in the main, for the sake of peace in the family. After two glasses, there was no better company than the deacon. A fine neighbor, drunk or sober! An', 'deed, an' he never was what you'd call *drunk*—on'y, if his wife had met him, she would have said he was lost forever.

"A fine man, an' a fine hor-rse me man bought of him for a small price, the deacon not knowin' it had blood in it—an' it a Morgan! The deacon knew nothin' about

hor-rses, but he could stick anny wan at sellin' cows. Ye had to have your eyes open when buyin' cows of him.

"A good, pleasant-spoken man, despite his hot temper. I could borry annything of the deacon, an', on'y for his wife, I need never have retur-rned a thing as long as he didn't want it. I had his lawn mower all one summer, an' at last Mrs. Pepperidge bought another, an' it wasn't till it was bought an' paid for that he reminbered that I'd borried the other. Of coorse, I sint it back, wid me compliments, as soon as he tould me what had happened. An aisy-goin' man, if he wasn't crossed. An' no airs at all. There's manny a Catholic not as sure of Heaven as Deacon Pepperidge, although I'd hate to have Father Dineen hair me say it. Will ye step in an' have some har-rd cider-r?"

I thought that perhaps the minister might have something illuminating to say about a deacon in his own church, so I called on the Reverend Mr. Hills one day, in passing, and asked him to tell me something about a man who had struck me as being a very representative New Eng-lander of the good old farmer type.

"Deacon Pepperidge had just enough of the devil in him to make a man of him. A spade was a spade to him, and he had no vices that he concealed. The weight of opinion in this community is against the taking of alcohol in any form or shape, but Deacon Pepperidge was fond of a little hard cider, as I happen to know, for I like it myself, and am a thorn in the flesh to some of the good people here because I insist on sending my apples to the cider mill. Heaven sends us many things. It is for us to use them or not, as we see fit, but I can't see that my neighbor has any voice in the matter of my diet or drink, and the deacon felt the same way.

"He was a thorough Christian, in the essentials, and as good an American as I ever met. The United States will live, and expand, and rise to greater heights because in every community from coast to coast there are such men as he; men who, in spite of their hard, workaday lives, have a certain idealistic spirit that is not to be found in the same class of men in other countries.

"He was a man of unusual executive ability, and he had a very logical mind. For thirty years he was head selectman, and the roads in this section are a monument to his ability and good common sense. When he was fifty-five, he took a trip to France to study the roads there, and his visit bore fruit soon after his return. He was an excellent selectman. He was full of public spirit. He had

abundant humor, of the sly, take-it-or-leave-it kind. He gave his time freely for the good of his town and county.

"And yet he had his foibles. Honest as the day is long, an incorruptible trustee; but, approach him in a cattle deal, and, unless you kept all five senses working overtime, at top speed, he'd get much the best of you—better of you.

"And, for a deacon, his language was not always quite as mild as it might have been. But there was this about Deacon Pepperidge: He'd rip out an oath before me, or even in church, as soon as he would anywhere. And he did hate Hungarians! Irish he accepted as a necessary evil in New England, but Hungarians were for Hungary, in his opinion. I dare say his next-door neighbor, Moritz Yeddi, was relieved when he passed away, for there was no love lost between them; and I'm bound to say that the deacon was generally in the wrong in the quarrels they had over fences, and cattle, and the like.

"I miss the deacon very much in my work. He was a strong right hand, generous in his giving, and—with the exceptions I have noticed—a real Christian. This showed especially in his love for little children. He never had any of his own, but there wasn't a child in Fairsex County, at least, not in this northwestern portion of it, that didn't run to meet him. Nothing angered him more quickly than injustice or injury offered to a child. I remember once when a human hog—pardon my language, but that's what he is—knocked over the little Phelps child, while running his auto at—well, considerably above the legal limit. They tell me that the deacon, who saw the accident, and who realized how near death the child had been, gave Al—gave this man such a lecture as made him turn pale. I'm sorry to say, Mr. Minturn, that some of our summer residents are snobs, who think the natives are worms. But Mr. Alling—there, the cat's out of the bag—Mr. Alling found Deacon Pepperidge a very lively and vituperative worm. Must you be going? Looks a little like rain. Yes, we need it—we farmers."

I was unable to see the Hungarian, but I was told that, to him, the deacon represented all that was mean.

"I vos glad to go to his funeral," said he, "to make sure he vos dead."

But, take him by and large, I should say that Deacon Pepperidge was, on the whole, a very creditable human being—let us not say American, for we are wiping out boundary lines these days, and learning that "creditible human beings" grow in all climes.



FOR THE HONOR OF THE FIRM

By

Louise Morgan Sill

ILLUSTRATED BY WARREN V. CLUFF

THE manager looked up from his desk as a small, thin negro man entered the office and stood humbly, with his shabby straw hat in his hand, waiting to be asked his business. His African skin had that unhealthy pallor which asserts itself through the darker tint, producing a hue which is neither black nor gray, but an admixture of both.

"What do you want, Sam?" said the manager briefly, with his eyes again on his papers.

The man drew nearer to the desk, with an air of great embarrassment.

"Mistah Miller, suh, I wants a vacation, please, suh."

The manager looked up in astonishment.

"A vacation!" he exclaimed. "In the middle of the busy season. What's the matter with you?"

"There ain't nothin' special the matter with me, boss, only I's jest tired. I sure does need a vacation."

Mr. Miller looked the man over. There was something tired in his expression and pose, as he stood like a weary horse with one hip lower than the other. But he was the best worker among all the frequently incompetent negroes whom the enterprising firm of Gaylord & Company employed. These men, rising at three in the morning, were in the full swing of their work at four, and those who were lazy, or bad

workmen, delayed or endangered the fulfillment of contracts upon whose success the reputation and life of the firm depended. Even Mr. Gaylord, the owner of the business, arose at four every morning, and with his own eyes saw the work started for the day. He was still a young man, and to win in this strenuous game known as business he spared, in time of pressure, neither his men nor himself.

Samuel Pickles was one of his best workmen, not so strong as some others, but more faithful than any. Day after day, summer and winter, Sam was at his post long before daybreak. His punctuality was only equaled by his pride in the firm. All about town, in the few moments he could claim for his own, he boasted:

"Yas, indeed, I works for Gaylord & Company. I wouldn't work for no other folks."

He had once been a stable and garden man in Mr. Gaylord's family, and his transference from the residence of the "boss" to the employment of the firm itself, however humble his position in reality was, had been to Sam the achievement of a great ambition. His respect for the firm had given him an equal respect for himself. Behind all his actions was the constant recollection that he worked for Gaylord & Company. It was Samuel Pickles' noblesse oblige.

The manager appreciated Sam, and for that reason was loath to give him leave of absence. He was not an unkind man—but negroes were made to work. What else were they good for?

"How much vacation do you want?"

"I only jest wants three days, boss," said Sam hesitantly.

He had intended to ask for a week—he was tired, painfully tired. But the manager seemed so discouraging.

"Ah, well!" Mr. Miller's tone was mollified. "If you only want three days, that's all right. Begin tomorrow?"

"Yas, Mistah Miller, thank you, suh."

Sam sidled out, and the manager went on with his work.

The next morning Sam awoke at the accustomed hour of three, and before he fully regained consciousness he was out of his poor bed. But the touch of the cool, bare floor aroused him to the happy realization that he was not now obliged to go to work. He promptly returned to bed, and in five minutes was again asleep.

When he finally awoke from this slumber of exhaustion, it was evening. He dressed in his best Sunday clothes, including his highest white collar, his purple necktie which one of Mr. Gaylord's children had given him at Christmas, and a large ring brilliantly jeweled with false stones. This ring gave him an intoxicating sense of richness. The touch of its artificial gold made

him artificially golden, and he basked in the imaginative splendor.

He took dinner with the fat and black Widow Jackson, from whom he rented his shabby room upstairs. They dined sumptuously on pork, and cabbage, and pie.

"Lawdy, how fine you do look, Mistah Pickles!" said Mrs. Jackson, as they sat at table. "You must have a begagement with some lady, I 'spect."

She smiled archly, heaping his plate with cabbage.

Sam chuckled egotistically.

"No, not this evenin', Mis' Jackson. I'se got a ungement with a lady, 'bout this time to-morra, though."

"I 'spect it must be Miss Lindy Thompson," said Mrs. Jackson, unabashed.

"That's jest who it is. I's got a ungement to take Miss Thompson to a ball. I'se got a three days' vacation, Mis' Jackson."

"You don't say!" said Mrs. Jackson, with awe.

"That's what I'se got—a three days' vacation. I hopes to get the

good of it, but looks like I has to sleep most the time, I'se so dog tired."

"I reckon you is," answered his hostess sympathetically, as she cut a generous slice of pie. "You cert'n'y does work like a dog."

After dinner, Sam strolled downtown, walking as nearly as possible in imitation of Mr. Gaylord, and raising his hat, as Mr. Gaylord did, to one or two imaginary ladies whom he did not



After dinner, Sam strolled downtown, raising his hat, as Mr. Gaylord did, to one or two imaginary ladies whom he did not meet.

meet. He had a dollar in his pocket, and this gave him a feeling of independence and power. He had the consciousness also that he was adding credit to Mr. Gaylord's business by his present appearance of a gentleman. His sense of the dramatic was satisfied.

Presently he passed the most important hotel in the town. Though he was a temperate man, it occurred to him that to go where white gentlemen went, and to take something to drink in the way in which white gentlemen took something to drink, would properly be his next enjoyment. So he turned into the hotel, and approached the bar.

The place was brilliantly lighted and furnished, and several well-dressed white men stood at the bar, drinking quietly.

Sam politely approached the mahogany counter, where the attendant stood in his immaculate white jacket. The man looked at him with a cold expression.

"What do you want?" he asked contemptuously.

The curt words aroused the negro man's pride. His gray pallor deepened. But he answered with humble politeness:

"I wants a drink, suh."

The man hesitated. It was contrary to the rules to serve negro men. But he did not want any excitement to disturb his white customers. He knew how to rid himself of unwelcome visitors quietly.

"What do you want?" he said, more suavely.

Sam gave his order in conciliatory tones, and the man placed a bottle and a small glass before him.

"That will be fifty cents," he said, watching the negro's face.

Sam knew that the price ought to be fifteen cents, but his face betrayed no surprise, for he understood.

"That's all right, boss," he said.

After emptying the glass, he drew his dollar from a rather frayed and shiny pocket, and laid it courteously on the counter. The man gave him back the

remaining half dollar. But the potato had warmed Sam's spirits, and he was thinking of himself rather proudly as Mr. Gaylord's man. He waved his hand at the money, relinquishing it freely.

"That's all right, boss; keep the change," he said, and walked out, leaving the white man staring after him.

After this, Sam's good spirits failed him, and it was not long before he realized that he had no further supply of energy with which to enjoy himself, nor any more money. So he returned home and went to bed, carrying even into his dreams the wound the white man had dealt him.

He remembered it the next day as he sat in Mrs. Jackson's kitchen, and watched her as she baked corn bread. He had a desire to tell her of the way in which the white man had humiliated him, and to protest against what seemed to him the social wrongs of his race. But pride prevented him, not only pride in himself, but pride in Gaylord & Company. He felt sore and weary, in spite of his long night's sleep.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door of Mrs. Jackson's flimsy shanty. She arose from stooping before the oven, where she had just placed her bread, and turned to Sam a black face glistening with perspiration.

"Jest step to the door, and see who's that knockin', Mr. Pickles," she said, in a coaxing tone. "I'se hot as a fryin' pan, and I don't want to catch no cold."

Sam opened the door, and found there a negro man from Gaylord & Company. He was not much of a man, and his chief office was the running of errands. His clothes were very shabby, but his black face expressed a ready good humor.

"Good mornin', Sam," he said; "Mr. Miller wants to know ef you'll come on down there and do Rip Johnson's work? Rip ain't come, 'cause he's dead. Mr. Miller says he only wants you for half a day—that's all he wants you, jes' half a day."

Sam's face fell. His first sensation was one of dismay at being summoned

to work before his vacation was finished. Then he began to feel the pride of one whose chief stands in need of his help. He began to smile. This new consciousness of self-respect seemed to compensate for the mortification he had suffered the night before.

"I've got a unengagement with a lady for this evenin'," he said, with some importance, "but I reckon I can get th'ou' in time for that. You jest tell Mr. Miller I'll be right down there."

Consequently Sam worked very hard for the remainder of the day, and returned to his room more weary, if possible, than he had been before his vacation commenced, and in but a sorry condition in which to make his preparations for taking Miss Lindy Thompson to a ball. He dared not yield to his inclination to sleep, knowing that if he once lost consciousness, he would be sure to sleep for hours, and commit the crime of not fulfilling his obligation to Miss Lindy. He hoped to marry Miss Lindy some day, when his wages should be raised—and he was not so tired.

It was nearly half past eight when he had put on all his best clothes—the swallowtail coat Mr. Gaylord had once worn being his proudest possession. Wearing that coat, he felt more than ever intimately devoted to his employer, and more solemnly consecrated to the firm. He wore also a pink necktie decorated with red spots, a scarfpin brilliant with white and red stones, and the bejeweled ring. And besides these, a pair of yellow kid gloves, which he had purchased himself. He never doubted the favorable impression his attire would produce in the mind of Miss Lindy, and he started very cheerfully for her little house at the other end of the town.

As he walked in the soft night air, his fatigue grew with every step. He was mortified to find himself almost overpowered by sleep. By the time he reached Miss Lindy's little wooden house on Limber Street, he concluded that he was obliged to sit on her doorstep and sleep a few minutes before venturing into her presence. The street was dark except for the straggling light

of a gas lamp on the corner, and the little house and indeed the whole neighborhood were soothingly quiet and peaceful. Sam sat down on the small brown wooden stoop, took off his shabby derby, and, leaning his head against the hard railing, he drew a long sigh of relief, and was almost instantly asleep.

With that slumber on the stoop of Miss Lindy Thompson's house, Sam Pickles passed forever out of the active life of Gaylord & Company.

Nearly three months later, Mr. Gaylord and his manager sat together in the company's office.

"Have you ever heard anything of Sam?" Mr. Gaylord asked, turning the pages of a ledger where the negro's name on a pay roll had caught his attention.

"Not a word," said Mr. Miller, sorting the papers in a pigeonhole of his desk. "But I think I saw him the other day."

Mr. Gaylord closed the ledger, and looked up.

"Saw him?" he said, in a tone of displeasure. He liked Sam, and had not lost faith in him, in spite of his inexplicable disappearance. "Where did you see him?"

"I was driving over in Arlington County, and passed a gang of men from the workhouse, working along the road; I could almost swear one of 'em was Sam. But I looked him full in the face, and he didn't, or wouldn't, recognize me, so I wasn't sure."

"There were wages due him, weren't there?" asked Mr. Gaylord.

"Yes, about two weeks, I reckon."

"I wish you'd drive over to the workhouse the first chance you have, Miller," said Mr. Gaylord, "and see if Sam is there, and what he's there for. He didn't drink, and he worked like a horse. I'd like to find out about this just as soon as possible."

"Yes, sir."

The result of this conversation was Mr. Miller's report to his chief two days afterward.

"It was Sam, all right, Mr. Gaylord! He was found asleep on a doorstep,



"I passed a gang of men from the workhouse, working along the road; I could almost swear one of 'em was Sam."

flashily dressed, and arrested for drunkenness and vagrancy. You know they arrest niggers for any reason at all around here."

Mr. Gaylord swore under his breath. "Blamed fools!" he said aloud. "How long has he been there?"

"His time was three months; he's only got a week more to serve. But still——"

Mr. Miller hesitated; he knew his chief's attachment to this negro.

"Well?"

"You won't see Sam any more, I'm afraid. He's dying. The physician says he's probably been sick for several years. I always thought he had a kind of gray look."

Mr. Gaylord said nothing, but got up and walked to the window.

Presently he spoke gruffly.

"Did you see him?"

"No, sir."

"Why in thunder didn't he let us know? He ought to have been in a decent hospital. Is my buggy hitched up?"

"Yes, sir, it's outside now."

"Tell Tom to get a bottle of cognac from Shirmer's, and be ready to go with me to the workhouse at once."

John Gaylord thought the county workhouse as bleak an institution as he had ever seen. It stood on a flat and nearly treeless plain, which looked as if it were continuously haunted by an implacable wind. The square, curtainless windows looked like, hollow eyes staring from a skull.

"Why didn't that fool nigger let me know?" was the constant reiteration of his thought.

The superintendent, an elderly man with cold eyes and a thin beard, received Mr. Gaylord in his dingy little office.

"Mr. Gaylord? Oh, yes. There was a man from your firm here the other day. I'm sorry about this nigger, Mr. Gaylord, but of course we haven't got anything to do with the proceedin's of the law. We just take care of the victims—haw—haw! This nigger come here for vagrancy and drunkenness. He didn't, eh? Didn't drink? And

worked like a hoss? Funny, ain't it. Well, well, of course we didn't know. He got sick—almost as soon as he come—these niggers drop off like flies sometimes. We get used to 'em. But he kept on workin', so we thought he was gettin' along all right. When he had to take to bed, we asked him if he had any friends, and he said he didn't have nary one. Most of 'em ain't got no friends, so we didn't think nothin' of that. And his name was Sam Pickles? Pickles, haw, haw! Sour kind o' name. Well, he told us his name was Bob Jones, so we entered him on the books like that. That's why you didn't hear nothin' about it. What did he do that for, you reckon? Curious kind o' nigger. Oh, yes, you can go right to his bed, Mr. Gaylord. Here, you Dick, show this gentleman up to Bob Jones' room."

A shambling old negro bobbed and bowed to Mr. Gaylord, and led the way up a pair of somewhat rickety stairs to an upper landing.

"Disaway, suh," he repeated, turning this way and that through rambling corridors full of stale air and the odors of smoked pork. With the brandy under his arm, John Gaylord followed, and entered the miserable room. It was dim and dusty. An unpainted wooden table served for a bureau, and the wretched bed was covered with a red calico coverlet, in contrast to which the dying negro looked bizarre.

Sam's color was more gray than ever, and there were deep hollows in his cheeks and at his temples.

"That you, Mr. Gaylord, suh?" he muttered, as his employer bent over him.

"Yes, Sam. I've just heard you were here. I'm sorry about this," said the white man, taking into his own the bony hand with its tan-colored palm.

After a sip or two of cognac, Sam seemed to rouse himself.

"You cert'n'y was good to come to see me, boss," he said, with his short breath. "I hopes to get back to work soon—my time's most up."

"Never mind about work, Sam. You need a good rest. But why didn't you let us know you were here?"

"Boss—I sent you a letter. I 'spect you ain't never got it; I knew you'd 'a' come if you had. A man jest gettin' out of here took it for me. He promised he'd take it to the house."

Mr. Gaylord suddenly had a dim recollection of an incident of no importance reported to him by one of the children some time before. A scrawl on brown paper had been found under the front door of his home. It read:

Boss, please send somebody to the wuk-house. I'se in trubble.

"What name did you sign to your letter, Sam?" he asked gently.

"Bob Jones, suh," said Sam. "I didn't want nobody to know I was here, suh. You see, I works for you, boss, and I—I—"

"You didn't want to disgrace us, Sam. Was that it?"

"Yas, suh, that's it, suh."

"Take a drop more of brandy."

Mr. Gaylord held it to the ashen lips, and there was silence for a moment. Then Mr. Gaylord spoke again, controlling his regret.

"We appreciate all that you did, Sam. But I am more sorry than I can say that you had to do it! You see, no one knew who 'Bob Jones' was."

Sam made no answer for a moment.

"That's so, suh," he said then, with a puzzled contraction of his forehead.

He was silent for a while, struggling with this problem of the mistake he had made. Then his breathing became more difficult, as if from emotion.

"Boss," he said, "you won't never let Mis' Gaylord or the child'en or anybody know I was here, suh? 'Cause I works for Gaylord & Company, I does, and I—I—"

His voice trembled on the words.

"No one shall ever know, Sam, for the honor of the firm," said Mr. Gaylord, with an emotion which he was never afterward to forget.

Sam died two days later, but the meaning of his strange disappearance was never explained, not even to Miss Lindy Thompson, who became, because of it, the heroine of a sad and mysterious romance.

Whom the Gods would destroy



by
Elmore
Elliott
Peake

Author of "The Adder's Sting," "The Taming of Babette," "Wells Without Water," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

CHAPTER I.

WHERE the narrow valley of the little Pecatonica River suddenly widens into a circular, bowl-shaped depression on the landscape, Lake Pecatonica, with its sparkling blue waters, lies like a jewel. A generation ago its shores presented a varied scene of husbandry. To-day it is the play yard of the rich. The farmhouses have vanished, just as the Indian tepees of a still earlier era vanished, and on their sites stand the luxurious villas and châteaux of a metropolitan plutocracy.

At the north end of the lake, however, amid a grove of titanic elms, a single farmhouse—a large, old-fashioned brick, with its brood of white outbuildings—still clings to the land. As the sole representative of a bygone day, the ancient house strikes a note of pathos in the breast of the spectator.

Yet it is in reality anything but an object of pity. Its occupant, some ten years ago, lived a life which his father and his grandfather would have regarded as one of luxury—times have so changed. The house had been fitted with modern plumbing; a private wire from Hebron, the nearest village, supplied electric light; a furnace had supplanted the base-burner stoves of a former day; a gasoline engine supplied

a copious flow of water wherever it was needed, in house, barn, and distant pasture troughs; riding plows turned the rich black soil up to the subtle influence of sun and air.

Moreover, Brandon Flenner owned a machine of which his father had never heard, an automobile, by means of which he could reach Hebron, ten miles away, in twenty minutes—a journey which his father's famous bay mare, Lucile, had once made in fifty minutes, when a harvest hand had lost his arm in a threshing machine.

Flenner, a slender, tough, tanned young man, clad in a khaki suit and leggings, stood in his barnyard one day, watching the approach of a team which his horseman's eye told him belonged to a livery stable in Hebron. Presently he made out the passenger, a lawyer from the city, who had visited him on several previous occasions, and tried to buy his farm.

"Meadowrue" was not for sale, and the reappearance of the legal gentleman gave its young proprietor no pleasure. However, he advanced and gave the smooth-faced, neatly dressed visitor his hand.

"I fear you have come to regard me as a nuisance by this time, Mr. Flenner," observed the latter suavely, extending a soft white hand. "But I am now authorized by my client to make

some concessions, which I feel sure will put the transaction in a wholly different light. That is to say, I can now offer you a price for your farm which I think you will find it to your advantage to accept."

"Possibly, Mr. Whately," observed Flenner dryly.

"Not to mince matters, as I have to return by the next train, I am authorized to offer you two hundred and fifty dollars an acre, straight through, for your land, though at least a hundred acres out of the three hundred and twenty are of a character, owing to their distance from the lake, which the owner of a summer home could have no possible use for."

"I have use for them," returned Flenner bluntly.

"For what purpose? I refer mainly to the bogs."

"For pasturing cattle. That same boggy land, which looks so worthless to you, affords good feed when the upland pastures are all burned up, in dry years."

Seated on a trestle in the barnyard, they talked for half an hour, Flenner turning off thin, curly shavings from a piece of pine with his jackknife, Whately lighting one cigarette after another.

"You certainly realize, Mr. Flenner," observed the latter finally, "that I am offering you an unusual price for farm land. Therefore I take it that you have some ulterior motive for not selling. Would you object to telling me what it is?"

"This is my mother's childhood home. She was born in this house, married in it, gave birth to her children in it. She learned her letters in that little schoolhouse over yonder, on the brow of the hill. I don't believe she would be happy anywhere else. And I would rather make my mother happy, in her declining years, Mr. Whately, than to own the millions of your client."

"A most laudable sentiment, Mr. Flenner," observed the lawyer. "I am not aware, however, of having said that my client is worth millions."

"I don't think you have," returned Flenner, with a keen smile. "Nor was it necessary for you to say it. Laying that aside, however, I might add, in justification of my refusal to sell, that this land is steadily increasing in value. Property around this lake has recently been sold for as much as a thousand dollars an acre."

"Where there was a large lake frontage," interposed Whately quickly. "You have only some fifteen hundred feet, I believe. A great deal of your land, too, lies very low."

"I might further urge," ran on Brandon Flenner, not at all seriously, but in a rather whimsical way, "that I am not an ordinary farmer. I'm a specialist, a breeder of wheat. For years I have been experimenting with a variety which I have finally 'fixed'; that is to say, brought it to an equilibrium from which it will breed true to type, for a limited time, at least."

"Couldn't you experiment somewhere else?"

"Not so well. I have had every section of this farm analyzed by experts from my Alma Mater, Cornell University. Further, I have fertilized scientifically, until I know just what every acre will do and will not do. I know just how much rain will make some fields too wet and others just right. In fact, I know my farm just the way you know the top of your desk, with its varied papers."

"I don't doubt it," said Whately cheerfully. "There are, however, one or two unusual, even unique, facts in the history of this farm of yours, which have a bearing upon its desirability, and which I offer for your studious consideration."

He threw away the stub of his last cigarette, and lighted a cigar, after which he gave each sleeve a hitch, in the manner of a prestidigitator, in order to assure his audience that he has nothing concealed in his cuff.

"In the first place," he began, very slowly and impressively, "you know that a considerable portion of this farm was once marsh, it being the west branch of the delta formed by the Pecatonica

River. This marsh, containing perhaps sixty or seventy acres, was a long strip, crossing the farm from north to south, and cutting it squarely in two. It literally cut it in two, moreover, for during wet springs it was impassable, even for cattle. You know that to be so?"

"Certainly."

"Now, the same conditions prevailed on the east side of the delta. A Mr. Amos Pickthall owned that side—the first man, by the way, to recognize the possibilities of this lake as a summer retreat. He was wealthy, and a man of influence throughout the State. He conceived the idea of building what is now known as the Hebron dam, and diverting the surplus water into Catfish Creek. Your father, being a beneficiary of the project, bore a part of the expense. But first it was necessary to get an enabling act through the legislature, and here Pickthall's extensive social and commercial relations stood him in good stead.

"So far so good. Now, and this is the point I wish to make: The legislature can repeal that act at any time that it deems that dam a nuisance and a detriment to the people. And, believe me or not, complaint has already been made by owners of land now submerged by the waters of the reservoir."

Flenner thoughtfully fixed his eyes upon the splendid forested slope, a little over a mile away, on which Amos Pickthall had erected his summer home. That had not been so long before but that Flenner could remember it, but the Pickthalls had all passed on now.

Then, only a little over a year before, had appeared the new owner of the place—Aaron Hume, the multimillionaire, the railroad king, the American prince of finance, etc., to mention only a few of the names invented by cub reporters in their inspired moments. The old house had gone down in a cloud of plaster dust, and on its site had risen heavenward a vast pile of gray stone, with quadrangles and wings, hanging balconies, towers, and embrasured battlements.

The attached land had been increased proportionately. Using Amos Pick-

thall's three hundred acres as a base, the octopus Hume had flung out his golden tentacles, fastening them upon farm after farm, until he now held within his grasp a princely tract of three thousand acres. But there was one blot upon the fair domain, in the eyes of the owner—Brandon Flenner's farm of Meadowrue, which lay in the center of Hume's holdings. And Flenner knew this, and was thinking of it now.

"Let me correct you there," he observed. "The reservoir covers no land except Aaron Hume's. I fancy the removal of the dam would be quite as undesirable to him as to me. It would release a few acres of back land, but the east branch of the Pecatonica, if turned into its old course again, would devastate the choicest part of his place, including his sunken garden."

"But would it?" Whately asked knowingly. "If the dam should be removed, it by no means follows that it would be allowed to follow its old forked course. One fork would carry off the water, and any new act passed by the legislature would certainly provide for as little waste of land as possible. And if the river were forced into one channel, from the present dam to the lake, upon whose land do you suppose that channel would be made—yours or Mr. Hume's?" The legal gentleman smiled suavely.

Flenner's eyes darkened with anger.

"Your hook is thinly baited, Mr. Whately. Your insinuation is that Hume is back of this alleged agitation for the removal of the dam. I say frankly that I don't believe Aaron Hume any more wants that dam condemned than I do. What he does want is my land. I want it, too. We'll see whether he gets it or I keep it."

"Mr. Flenner, I insinuate nothing. I do not admit, either, that I am Aaron Hume's agent. But, assuming that I were, and that it were he who wants this farm of yours, and that he became convinced he could not get it—as you say he shan't—don't you see that he might have a motive in getting the dam condemned, and turning the river's course through your land?"

V
1
4
—
2

N
O
V

1
1
XUM

"In order to force me to sell, do you mean?" demanded Flenner.

"Draw your own conclusions," answered the lawyer, flicking the ash from his cigar. "Aaron Hume is not a man who readily abandons a cherished project."

"Neither am I," returned Flenner grimly, rising, as if to close the interview. "I'll see if there isn't one man around this lake whom Aaron Hume, with all his money, can't muzzle. You may tell him that I will not sell."

"One moment, Mr. Flenner, and I will ask no more of your time. In your title to this land, I have discovered the shadow of a flaw. You perhaps know of it, but you have probably never given it a thought. When your grandfather, Moses Clay, bought this land of one Uz Gaunt, an agreement was entered into between the two parties, which was in effect an option. It was to the effect that Gaunt, at any time after a period of ten years, could buy the land back at a reasonable price, which price was to be determined by a properly selected board of appraisers. As long as Gaunt lives that option is a threat, not exactly to your title, but to your ownership of this farm."

Flenner laughed.

"You seem to have picked up a good deal of information about my farm. That agreement, however, was entered into fifty years ago. Uz expected to get rich from some of his innumerable inventions, and then to buy back this land. At least, so he said. But the returns from this farm went for whisky, and every dollar that he has made since has followed the same course. His inventions are a joke. He has never made a penny from one of them, and never will. For the last thirty years he has lived on the bounty of my father and myself. Only yesterday he begged a quarter of me. He's a sot and a crack-brain, on the edge of the grave, and to hold him before my eyes as a scarecrow is too absurd to be discussed."

"It is true that Mr. Gaunt is an aged man—eighty-four, I believe—and cannot, in the order of nature, live many years longer. But you are mistaken as

to the worthlessness of *all* of his inventions. He has invented a harness buckle of great practical value, so I'm told. In fact, I understand that he has recently been made a large offer for his rights by one of the big buckle manufacturers of this country. It's quite possible, it seems to me, that Mr. Gaunt, old as he is, may yet live to realize his long-cherished hope of buying back his old farm."

Flenner glared ominously into the suave rascal's eyes; then he laughed.

"He'd sooner buy a distillery. If anybody buys that buckle of his, it will be that gentleman over yonder," nodding toward Greystone, "who has employed you to nose about for some method of cajoling or intimidating me into selling my farm; or, failing in that, to defraud me of it. I know all about that buckle. Uz invented it twenty-five years ago. My father, always ready to give Uz a boost, had a dozen of them made by hand, at his own expense, and we tried them on our harness—more to please Uz than because we had any faith in them. They were too complicated, and broke down in a few months, as we had expected them to. Good-by, sir."

Whately rose, pulled on his gloves, though it was a balmy May morning, and smilingly extended his hand.

"The disappointment over your refusal to sell will be my client's, not mine. Personally, therefore, I can say to you, with truth, that I trust you will have no cause in the future to regret your present decision."

CHAPTER II.

Flenner sat in his study that night long after his mother, the maid, and their two farm hands had gone to bed. In his father's day there had been no such thing as a "study" in the house; Moses Clay, his grandfather, would have regarded a library as necessary to a farm as a menagerie. But Brandon, after an academic and agricultural course at Cornell, had seen a new light, and the walls of the present large room were lined with bookcases.

The ways of his grandfather and his

father were not Brandon's ways. The old, simple rotation of crops—wheat, and corn, and clover—no longer satisfied Brandon. He had come back from college with ideas which excited the ridicule of the neighboring farmers, and which had filled even his own mother, proud as she was of her son, with grave doubts.

However, other men had devoted themselves to the production of a superior breed of cattle or horses or hogs, and had profited greatly thereby. Brandon's idea was to produce a superior variety of wheat, and for seven years he had worked to that end.

On the big oak table over which he now bent was sheet upon sheet of foolscap paper, filled with small, almost microscopic figures, letters, and algebraic signs, arranged in a manner which any one else—except his instructor in agriculture at Cornell—would have found entirely unintelligible.

These sheets, as a matter of fact, were the genealogical table of a single grain of wheat which, seven years before, had been isolated from thousands of other grains, for its size, smoothness, content of gluten, early maturity, and freedom from rust. The other grains in the same head had been sacrificed to chemical analysis. But this, the finest grain, had been carefully, almost tenderly, buried in the soil, watered, fertilized, and treated with the greatest of care.

Its progeny had likewise been planted and watched with equal care. The next year, and the next, and the next, the process had been repeated, until, on this night in question, the multiplied progeny of the original grain covered sixty acres of Flenner's choicest land.

A wonderful wheat it had proved to be. Flenner had proved repeatedly that it added not less than a dollar or two to the value of every acre of cropping; and this not on his own soil alone, but on a dozen different soils, which he had imported by the carload from various wheat-growing sections of the country. Moreover, the wheat, and this was the most valuable feature, would breed true to type.

That harvest was now almost at hand. Every bushel that he could spare of the forthcoming crop had been contracted for before, at twenty times the price of ordinary wheat; and to-night, for perhaps the hundredth time, he drew his leather-bound order book from the drawer of the table, and scanned its contents. It totaled fifty thousand dollars, estimating his crop at forty bushels to an acre! With favorable weather the yield would be larger, and he might be able to spare another ten thousand dollars' worth.

Brandon's reverie was broken by the appearance at the door of his mother, clad in a dark dressing gown.

"Do go to bed, Brand!" she pleaded. "It's nearly one o'clock, and you haven't had more than five hours of sleep for three nights now."

"Sleep!" He laughed softly, like a boy. "One can sleep in the grave, mother. Life is the time to be awake. I've been making a little love to Miriam's Choice." Miriam was his mother's name, and Miriam's Choice was the name of his new wheat. "I have also decided to make one more attempt to buy Uz Gaunt's forty. I need it to stretch out in. I'm cramped here, like a young cowbird in a yellow warbler's nest."

"Uz will never sell, Brand," she answered. "If Mr. Hume failed to buy him out, you can't expect to do it. And that reminds me—what did Mr. Whately have to say to-day?"

Flenner hesitated, with not quite so cheerful a face.

"I am confident, mother, that he represents Aaron Hume. He raised his offer from two hundred to two-fifty. I refused it."

"Are you holding back on my account, dear?" she asked, after a pause.

"Not wholly. I have other reasons just as good for not selling."

"Promise me now, anyway, that you'll go to bed."

"Willingly," he answered, beginning to pile up his papers.

But before he turned in he slipped downstairs, and stepped out into the pale, silvered night. With the lake



"How easy it would be for you to treble that dose, and thus quietly eliminate an old brute like me from your life."

breeze lightly fingering his hot brow, he crossed the side yard, and entered a lane still inclosed by the rail fence which his grandfather's hands had laid.

At the corner of his first wheat field, he paused, and rested his arms upon the fence. The wheat had just spread a thick mantle of tender green over the black land. Under the moonlight it glowed frostily, like oxidized silver; farther away it was a neutral gray, and in the distance it turned to a blurred, nondescript purple.

Vaulting over the five-foot fence, Flenner stooped and stroked the cool, dewy, velvety blades of grass, as if they were sentient beings. The price which they would bring, a month or two later, was far from his mind; or, at the most, it was present only as the stamp and superscription of success. What he was thinking of was the secrets which he had wrested from nature in his years of experimentation.

CHAPTER III.

Flenner had started down the lane for the house, when he perceived a figure coming toward him. A trespasser at this hour of the night—after one o'clock—would ordinarily have excited suspicion; but even in the uncertain light of the moon Brand recognized the huge proportions of Uz Gaunt—a man who owned a "forty" of land on the northwest corner of Meadowrue farm.

Uz was one of the "characters" of Chinquapin Township—a man whose sayings and doings were recounted humorously around hearthstones, the cannon stoves in the stores of Hebron village, at picnics,

elections, and wherever men gathered in a social mood. In spite of his eighty-four years, and the barrels of whisky which he had drunk, and the den in which he had holed up every winter, like a woodchuck, for the last thirty years—ever since the last of his seven sons had died—he was still a hale old man, as straight as an Indian, and capable of tramping incredible distances on his solitary hunting and fishing excursions.

He now carried two cane poles over his right shoulder, and a string of fish dangled from his left hand. His trousers were rolled up to the knees, exposing his bare shanks and feet.

"A small-mouth fer your breakfast, Brand," said he.

"Thank you," said Flenner, accepting the fish. "I want just a word with you, Uz, for I haven't seen you lately. Have you thought over my last proposition for your land?"

"No, Brandy. There's some things I never think over, and one of them is a proposition for my land."

"I've heard differently. I've heard that you have been thinking over a proposition from Mr. Hume."

"A mistake, sonny, a mistake."

"I've heard also that Mr. Hume has become interested in your harness buckle."

"Who told you that?"

"A man who ought to know."

"If I have it's nobody's business but my own, I reckon," answered Uz sulkily.

"It's my business to this extent: I want to know whether I'm to regard you as a friend or an enemy."

"I don't know what sellin' one of my inventions has got to do with our friendship."

"It has a lot to do with it, as you very well know," answered Flenner sternly.

"Don't see it," returned Uz doggedly. "Everybody to suit hisself. That's what you're doin', I notice, piddlin' around with that wheat breedin' of your'n."

Flenner said good night, but called back:

"Make up your mind, Uz, whether you are going to tie to Hume or to me. You can't have us both."

On reaching the house he paused on the wide, vine-curtained veranda, and looked toward the red-tiled roof of Greystone, with its many slopes and valleys, rising mistily above the tallest trees. As he looked his face became sad. Under that roof slept the woman he secretly loved—Virginia Hume, Aaron's daughter. As he turned back to the summer before, when the Humes had taken possession of their new country home, it seemed to him as if he had loved her ever since that June dawn, when she had cantered down his lane, and exclaimed:

"Oh, Mr. Flenner, pardon my intrusion, but yesterday one of our men showed me such a head of wheat as I had never seen before, and I have come to see a whole field of it, if I may."

At the edge of the field, he had begun to explain his process to her, in the sim-

ple language he always used to the laity. But he quickly discovered that the technical language of the botanist and the plant biologist was as familiar to her as to himself. The next day she brought over a book from her library for him to read—a book on plant breeding, of which he had heard, but never seen. A few days later he was privileged to see her library itself, decorated with target pistols, field glasses, collecting cases, and other evidences of her love for God's great out-of-doors, but solidly lined with bookcases containing many of the books over which he had pored for years—encyclopedias of horticulture and agriculture, treatises on soils, botanics, bird books, and hundreds of others which he did not possess.

During that summer he had come to love Virginia. Yet marriage into her family, even had he any assurance that his love was requited, was quite unthinkable to Flenner. The Humes' world was not his world or his mother's. It was a world apart from all his traditions. It was a world which he despised—a world of boundless wealth, of vain show, as he conceived it, of hollowness and apery.

To-night there were other facts which made an alliance with Virginia even more hopeless. Flenner had come to hate Aaron Hume, and had every reason to suppose that the sentiment was reciprocal.

Last, but by no means least, Virginia's visits to Meadowrue had ceased this summer. He met her occasionally on the road, motoring, or horseback riding, and she greeted him as cordially as ever, but he knew that the iron will over at Greystone which bent the financial world to his ends was now bending her.

He climbed the stairs softly, so as not to wake his mother. As he flashed the light on in his study, to put away his papers in the little iron safe in one corner, he started somewhat. On the dark-red rugs were footprints—the prints of feet which had paddled through dust. Moreover, they were feet of a size which could belong to but one man in the township, and that man was Uz

Gaunt. Seeing that the house was dark, he had doubtless supposed that every one was in bed and asleep.

What had he wanted? No one had ever accused Uz of being a thief. Flenner himself could not believe it. Yet what had Uz wanted? It was not until he was half undressed that light broke on the young man. Uz, with his usual carelessness, had lost the agreement between him and the elder Flenner; had probably lost it many years before. What he had hoped to find to-night was doubtless Flenner's copy. Flenner smiled to himself. When the time came he might show that he, too, could carry a card or two up his sleeve.

CHAPTER IV.

At ten o'clock at night a limousine was moving at a comfortable speed between the railway station at Hebron and Greystone.

The car finally turned in at the wide main entrance, spun smoothly along over the perfect road, ran down a concrete slope at the rear of the house, under a sunken arch, and paused before the mouth of an elevator shaft—so close to it that when the three occupants of the car stepped into the elevator, an eavesdropper would not have got so much as a glimpse of them.

They were shot to the top floor of the house. Aaron Hume himself produced a key which opened the door that tapped the shaft, and, after his two companions had crossed the threshold, he swung the door to with the click of a spring lock. This door was the only entrance to this floor, no stairs leading up from below. No maidservant or manservant could enter it except when Hume or one of his two secretaries were present, for they carried the only keys.

More than this, no one except the trusted driver of his limousine knew when Aaron Hume entered or left these apartments. The subway and the elevator had been constructed for this purpose.

It was here, rather than in his city office, that he preferred to do his real work, to plan those coups which made

the financial world tremble, and brought down upon his head the maledictions of a great nation.

The shaded room, with its dark beams and panels, seemed a fitting place for such things. But his spacious office was not the only room on the floor. In addition there were half a dozen bedrooms—he and his two secretaries always slept on this floor, as did his important guests—a library, a small dining room, and a drawing-room.

When insomnia, the malignant devil that was always trailing at his heels, would not let him sleep, the push of a button would bring one of his aids to the great oaken table, where he often toiled the night through. If things went wrong, and he raged like a lion until his overwrought nerves gave way, and he fell in an epileptic fit, no one but his trusted secretaries was the wiser.

Likewise was the case when, with the soothing morphine coursing through his veins, he laughed softly to himself, dictated in a voice as gentle as a woman's, cracked jokes, or playfully tapped his subordinates upon cheek or shoulder.

He was a thickset man of medium height, with a leonine head and noble brow. But the fairy who had watched over his prenatal existence had one day given him a malicious twist. As a consequence, he walked with a slight limp; his left arm was an inch shorter than his right, and his mouth slanted downward to the left—just enough, when his humor was good, to add piquancy to his face.

His two companions to-night were his secretaries. One of these, the second, or assistant secretary, was a young man of perhaps thirty-five. He was an alert, intelligent young fellow, as every one closely associated with Hume had to be, but his handsome face was clouded with habitual discontent.

The other and first secretary was a young woman of striking, almost aggressive, beauty. Her features, not delicate, but so sharply chiseled as to make them seem so, were covered with a flawless skin. Her face was framed by a mass of tawny hair of such abundance that she had but to pitch it upon

her head to secure effects which most women, with all the auxiliaries of the dressing table, would work for in vain. Her hair was now so artlessly, or seemingly so artlessly, pitched up; but, in spite of her three hours' ride on the train from the city—most of which time she had spent in sleep—its heavy, glossy folds, so far from looking stringy or tousled, had the solid, sculpturesque effect of brass.

She tossed her long coat into a chair six feet distant, with the dexterity of a prestidigitator. She sprung the lid of a silver cigarette case, and, with a sureness that might have been the result of long practice, shook out a cigarette, tossed it to her lips, and lit it—all, apparently, with one complex, continued motion. Then she dropped upon a couch, and exhaled the smoke in whirling clouds.

"I have no inclination for sleep," observed Hume bluntly. "So we'll work a while, Usher—say till two o'clock. You had better not go to bed, either, Georgianna."

Usher gave the young woman a glance, as if to say: "How's that for a brute, when we were up last night until three o'clock!" She answered the look with a shadowy smile of amusement.

For three hours Hume dictated to Usher without pause, and with the regularity and precision of a machine. At half-past one he tossed the remainder of the unanswered correspondence into a wire basket, and said:

"You may retire now, Usher."

After the young man had disappeared, Hume looked toward the couch. "Georgia!" he called.

Miss Lighter, who had been asleep, yawned, stretched her arms above her head, and slowly came to a sitting posture. Her eyes were full of sleep, her cheeks were flushed, and her mouth drooped like a child's. In a way she was even more beautiful than when wide awake; there was more of feminine helplessness about her, and Aaron Hume looked at her with a tenderness which few people had ever seen in his small, gray eyes.

It might have been, however, only the

tenderness which a man feels for a faithful and time-tried servant. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of Hume's business associates probably supposed that Georgianna Lighter owed her position to her beauty. But such was far from being the case. She had proved the most valuable assistant whom Hume had ever employed. Her instinct was unerring, and he had intrusted her with secrets which he had never dared to impart to any other human being.

"Fix me a dose of medicine," said he kindly. "I think I can sleep to-night."

Georgianna opened a panel, which cleverly concealed a recess in the wall, and took therefrom a hypodermic syringe, a vial of tablets, and a bottle of distilled water.

"Eight grains?" she asked.

"Make it ten," he answered.

She dissolved a number of the tablets in the water, filled the syringe, and approached the table. Hume smiled as a sick man smiles at a nurse, loosened his cuff, and bared his forearm—a forearm speckled like a guinea's egg with former punctures of the needle.

"I have often thought," he observed pleasantly, as she prepared a space on his skin by swabbing it with a bit of cotton dipped in alcohol, "how easy it would be for you to treble that dose, and thus quietly eliminate an old brute like me from your life."

"I have often had the same thought," she answered coolly, stifling a pretty yawn, which exposed her regular, white teeth. They were beautiful teeth, yet they were sharp and strong as well, and suggested that on provocation they could bite and tear like an animal's. "But so long as I have no motive, I presume you are perfectly safe," she added. "Had you set aside, say, half a million for me in your will, the case might be different."

"How do you know that I haven't?"

She finished the sterilization of the square inch or so of skin; then, gathering a fold of flesh between thumb and forefinger of her left hand with practiced ease, she shot the insidious drug into his veins.

"Such things don't happen often out-

side of paper-bound romances," she answered indifferently, as she returned with the instruments of his slavery.

"Georgianna," said he, as she took the chair recently vacated by Usher, "I don't believe you realize the import of the trust I put in you. You are in possession of business secrets with which you could ruin me."

"Yes," she observed quietly.

"But why?" he demanded.

"Because you have to repose confidence in somebody, and you have discovered that I am the right fellow." Then, as if wishing to change the subject, she laid one of her jeweled hands upon a basket of papers, and asked: "Do you want to go into this Excel steel business to-night, or do you want to go to bed?"

"Neither. I want to talk to you."

CHAPTER V.

Georgianna Lighter had, in the space of her twenty-eight years, learned something about men. She had taken her first lessons from her father, a gentleman addicted to perfume, who invariably stepped out of his shabby flat in a top hat and Prince Albert coat, with gloves over his white, perfectly manicured hands—hands which had long known no harder labor than dealing a pack of cards, sometimes slipping one off the bottom. She had continued her course behind the counter of a great department store, and had graduated, so to speak, as a stenographer in various mosaic-floored, mahogany-finished offices occupied by bankers and brokers.

Her feeling for men, as a consequence, was not that of Eve's for Adam. She instinctively assumed the defensive in their presence. The marital relation had never attracted her. Yet she was far from despising men; they afforded her a study of unflinching interest, and she much preferred their society to that of women. In fact, she had never had an intimate woman friend in her life.

She now fixed her inscrutable, peering, unwavering glance upon her employer. From his narrowed, pin-point pupils, she saw that the morphine was

doing its work, and she knew that whatever he said to-night would be of no significance to-morrow.

"What do you want to talk about?" she asked, as of a child.

"Just some things that are floating through my mind. You have been with me five years now. You have worked by night as well as by day. You have adjusted yourself to my varying moods. Whatever I may be, you are always the same. I am paying you a salary which I dare not make public, lest it smirch your good name. Yet it is less than you are worth to me. I have given you many presents. Yet I have often treated you harshly. You are not a bad woman. I know that well. Yet you are not what good women call good. You smoke cigarettes, you drink, you are indifferent to conventions."

He paused.

"Only so far as has been necessary to earn my bread and butter," she was on the point of answering. But there was a pride, a hardness, a stoicism in her which sealed her lips.

"My daughter hates you. You know that as well as I. She regards you as an adventuress. She little knows how much your efforts have contributed to the wealth she rolls in. Sometimes I have feared that these things—my harshness, Virginia's hatred—have made you indifferent to your position with me. I wanted to ask you to-night to give me a pledge to remain with me always."

"Always is a long time," she observed.

"Nothing in human experience is long, my girl," he exclaimed. "It was only yesterday that I was a boy. To-day I am fifty-five. I have twenty more years at the outside, possibly only five or ten. A man of my temperament and my infirmities does not live to a green old age. Already I feel my grasp loosening. I begin to feel lonely. I have always been lonely. My wife never understood me. My daughter doesn't understand me. The world does not understand me."

He paused, and then went on, rather irrelevantly: "Virginia has always been

an obedient daughter, and yet she is slipping from my grasp." His lips trembled, and then fire leaped from his eyes. "It's that accursed Flenner—that impudent puppy who has challenged me to get his land if I can. He's the magnet that is drawing her from me. Virginia has always been a girl of peculiar tastes. She loves flowers and birds—everything that grows. She would like to be a farmer. She has got together a library that would make an acceptable gift to a college of agriculture. And Flenner, with his farm, and his wheat, and all his other jimcrackery, has captivated her mind. But I have forbidden her to cross the Meadowrue line again, and she's a girl that will obey. And I shall come down upon the head of that young upstart like a thousand tons of brick. Oh, yes, you may be sure that I will. And I'll start the ball to rolling to-night. No sleep for me yet."

While he searched for some notes, Georgianna watched him through lazy, half-closed lids. The devil in him which made him almost universally hated was now roused. The woman before him could see it in the emphasized wryness of his mouth, as if it were being twisted by invisible hands; she saw it in the squinting of his left eye, and a sort of dropping down of the whole left side.

When one of these transports of rage seized Hume, Georgianna had seen Francis Usher turn pale. But she was not afraid. She could truthfully say that she had never known the feeling of fear, and her chief emotion now was a mild curiosity.

"That old grizzly bear that I had haled up here the other day is Uz Gaunt. You remember him?"

"I shouldn't be likely to forget him."

"Well, Uz is the key which will open our lock. Not a dainty, polished key, I'll admit; but you won't have to touch him."

"I! What have I got to do with it?"

"Everything. Listen, now!"

He explained to her the agreement made fifty years before between Uz Gaunt and Brandon Flenner's grandfather. He stated that he intended to

buy the right to Uz's buckle; Uz would take the money and buy Meadowrue farm; then Hume would trade back the buckle for the farm. It was as simple as A B C after it had been thought out.

"Then I shall give Uz a thousand or so for his trouble, and wash my hands of the old scoundrel. But he has lost his copy of the agreement, though I know from the statement of the very notary public before whom it was attested that Uz has told me the truth. The other copy is in the possession of Brandon Flenner. More than that, it is kept in a little safe which stands in the corner of Flenner's study." He paused, with eyes sparkling maliciously. "You go and get that copy for me."

She gazed at him calmly.

"How, please?"

"By becoming a summer boarder in Flenner's house, and by watching that safe, day and night, until you find it open."

"Suppose I am recognized?"

"You will not be recognized. No one knows you out here, except a few of the servants and my daughter, and I shall interdict all intercourse between Grey-stone and Meadowrue."

"Suppose I am caught in the act? I believe there is a law against such trifling with other people's belongings." Her voice vibrated with irony.

"If you are caught, it will be through your own bungling. Need I tell you that I'll stand by you, come what may? And you will not be caught."

"How can you use a stolen document?"

"That is neither here nor there, but I'll answer your question: By swearing that it came to me from an unknown source, through the mails, or through a crack under the door, or in half a dozen other ways."

Georgianna smoothed a lock of tawny hair from her temple, and looked at her master gravely.

"I have done many things for you, Mr. Hume, that would not bear the light of day, but I never expected to be asked to burglarize a safe. Your tread is always elephantine wherever a woman's feelings are concerned—or a man's,

either, for that matter—but I hardly expected this, even from you.”

He darted her an angry glance.

“No lecture. Will you do it? Yes or no?”

“I will. One is not paid five thousand dollars a year for nothing. I know how to earn my salary.”

He grabbed at her hand, to stay her, as she swept past him. Failing to secure it, he thundered: “Stop!”

But she did not stop, and a moment later he heard the slam of her bedroom door.

CHAPTER VI.

If Aaron Hume could, by the aid of a magic glass, have looked across the vale, into Meadowrue kitchen, and seen Georgianna, with her sleeves to her elbows, and her hands powdered with flour, rolling out cooky dough, his face would have relaxed in a sardonic grin.

In three days Miss Lighter had made a place for herself in the Flenner family. She took care of her own room. She begged to be allowed to scatter corn to the chickens, night and morning. She watched the milking of the cows, almost enviously. She asked a thousand questions about the Wheat—always spelled with a capital at Meadowrue—until Brandon, who at first had reluctantly consented to the presence of a boarder in the house, said to his mother:

“I think Providence must have sent Miss Lighter along. I haven’t seen you so gay and girlish for years. She beats all the doctors’ tonics.”

Georgianna was not wholly playing a part. She herself could hardly have said where reality ended and make-believe began. To accomplish her purpose it was necessary, of course, for her to have the run of the house, to come and go as she pleased. But her animal spirits flowed in a vigorous tide. She luxuriated in a new environment. Every novelty invited her attention.

She was unmoral, rather than immoral. That her mission in this peaceful home was a dastardly one hardly occurred to her. She was merely serving, as faithfully as she knew how, that square-jawed, joyless man into whose

life she had drifted by chance, but who now seemed to control her by some subtle black art.

But one moonlight night, when she had strolled down to the shore, and taken a bench at a safe distance from the public path which encircled the lake—for she ran no chance of being seen and recognized—she suddenly found herself unhappy. It was a divine night, a night full of hope and promise. But, somehow, she seemed in it, but not of it. The trees, the fragrance, the bird note were not for her.

Presently she heard a footstep on the graveled path, and started slightly at the sight of a man approaching her. Then she recognized Francis Usher.

“Frank!” she exclaimed. “You startled me. What are you doing here? Mr. Flenner might appear at any moment, and how could I explain your presence?”

“I’m a stranger inquiring the distance to the Pressly-Mackey’s palatial home,” he answered lightly. “And I came, Georgia, because life was getting irksome without you. Old Hume has been in a devil of a mood ever since you left. It must be that his dope dropper is out of order.”

“How does it happen that you are not working to-night?”

“The directors of Bethany Steel are out as the old man’s guests, and he’s having the time of his life entertaining them. I peeped into the dining room as I left. He looked as happy as a bear with its back to a ledge of rocks, and a pack of stag hounds in front.”

She laughed. But her face grew grave again as she gazed at the silvered lake.

“Georgianna,” observed Usher, “I have held this job down about as long as I can. The old man’s brutality is getting past endurance.”

“He is no more brutal to you than he is to me,” she observed quietly. “And I’m a woman.”

“He’s worse to me than he is to you, Georgia, at least of late. He seems to have conceived a hatred for me. Under ordinary circumstances I would consider that a compliment.” He paused a

moment. "Georgia, I think he's jealous of me. I think he resents the little courtesies I show you."

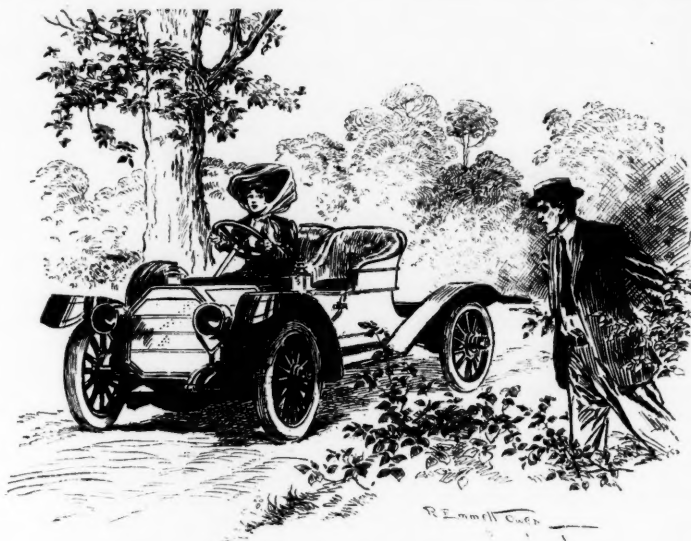
"I think the latter myself. You know I warned you about that. But jealous, Frank! Why, he no more loves me than he does the rug under his feet. He isn't capable of loving."

"But he owns you, body and soul; and my little attentions to you, which are few enough, God knows, offend his proprietary sense. Georgia, when you

"I wanted to say, Georgia, that I haven't spoken a word of love to you since I came. My salary is only about half of yours. My pride has sealed my lips. But I still love you. Can you say as much of me?"

"You have something more to say. Let that question go unanswered for the present."

"Very well. You have saved a nice little sum of money, and so have I. Come with me, and let us begin life over



Frank Usher strolled out of a bank of shrubbery which had effectually concealed him.

and I learned shorthand together, at night, after the store had closed, we were sweethearts. When you went up to twenty-five a week, and I was still pounding the keys ten hours a day for fifteen a week, we were still sweethearts. Then you made your ten-strike—you found Hume. You began to wear clothes that I couldn't have bought the trimming for. I thought I had lost you, but after a year or two you landed me with Hume also."

She smiled.

"It wasn't very difficult. He knew your capacity for work."

again. Let me make you a home. Let me apply the lessons I have learned from Hume, and I'll make more in a year than our salaries combined. Come with me, and be a lady, not a drudge, not a shooter of morphine into an old gorilla. Let us flee this evil-smelling sepulcher in which we live. Come with me—now—to-night. Do not enter that house up there again, except as an honest woman."

He had taken her hand in his, and at the end he put his hot, pleading eyes close to her face, so fair and tempting in the pale light of the moon, glowing

like a white rose. But he did not kiss her, as he once would have done. She sat without speech for some time, but finally tightened her fingers around his.

"Frank, all these things you abhor is the price I am paying for my success, poor thing that it is. It is not the price some foolish women pay, but it's enough—more than enough. And you have paid a price, too—a greater price than you know."

"What?" he demanded.

"A forged check," she answered, in a gentle voice. "A check for one thousand dollars, drawn on the Fourth National Bank, under date of July seventh, two years ago."

Usher's face grew bloodless.

"Hume knows it, too?" he asked, with a dry throat.

"Yes; but he doesn't know that I know it."

The man buried his face in his hands for several moments. The woman watched him with pitying, glistening eyes.

"Could anything that I say convince you that I am not a thief?" he finally asked.

"I know you are not a thief. I know that you paid the money back two days later. I know what you used it for. It was a commendable use. But your paying the money back does not undo your crime legally; and Aaron Hume did not lay aside that check for nothing. In all likelihood, he never expected to be compelled to use it. But should we fly together to-night, Frank, a human bloodhound would be on our trail by morning. Go now, please. It is growing late."

CHAPTER VII.

Georgianna retained her seat on the bench for some time, reviewing the events of the past eight days in her new home. She was rather pleased over the strategy by means of which she had first gained an entrance to Flenner's study.

This was a large, airy room on the second floor, in a wing, and thus somewhat isolated. It was not a room that she would naturally pass through, for it was out of her way, and just how to get

an introduction to it without appearing too curious had puzzled her at first. Asking for something to read had failed, for she had been at once conducted to two or three sectional bookcases downstairs, which contained novels and a number of the more popular books.

One day, however, she had an inspiration, and she said to Flenner:

"I wonder if you would object to showing me the genealogical tables of your wheat, of which you have spoken so often. Do you think I could understand them?"

"Certainly. We'll go up to the study now," said he.

The very first thing that Georgianna had seen in the room was a little, ancient safe, brown with age, standing in one corner; and it was with a thrill that she saw Flenner kneel before it, and twirl the knob of the combination.

The instant she saw him stoop, she had stepped swiftly but carelessly forward; but the face of the dial was rusty, and the figures so indistinct that she had been unable to catch the numbers to which he turned. In this strong box was the document she wanted, in all probability.

The next day she confessed to a habit of reading until the small hours of the night, and wondered archly if there was any objection to her curling up in the big leather chair in Mr. Flenner's study, by the droplight.

There was no objection, of course, and that night was the first of a series of vigils in the study, hours after Flenner, his mother, and the servants had gone to bed. She tried the safe, and she found it locked. Seated on a cushion, she spent nearly an hour before the stubborn door, with her delicate fingers upon the knob, patiently and with infinite caution trying it through test numbers, moving it to right and left a quarter, a half, a full turn, two turns, then back again in the same manner, always listening for the fall of the invisible tumblers. But, simple as the mechanism would probably have proved to one of that class of gentlemen who affect masks and bull's-eye lanterns, it baffled Miss Lighter.

She tried another tack, and in two or three nights had familiarized herself with the contents of Flenner's table drawer, his rolloptop desk—always left open—a tin box full of old letters, receipts, canceled notes, and other documents, and a walnut chest of drawers. But the document she sought was not uncovered, which convinced her that Hume's information—wherever it might have come from—to the effect that the agreement was in the safe was correct.

She next tried daylight operations, visiting the study almost hourly, or, at least, as often as Flenner entered and left it, hoping that the day would come when he would forget to lock the door. Yet, rather strangely, he never forgot. So she resorted to her first stratagem again—she asked to see the genealogical tables, ostensibly to have a certain confused point made clear. Then she asked another time to see them, and still another. But though each time she stood at Brandon's very elbow, she could never quite catch the figures at which the whirling disk stopped and reversed under his quick, familiar manipulation.

Moreover, after closing the door, he never failed to give the combination knob a few turns—carelessly, abstractedly, almost unconsciously, it seemed, and yet effectually. After an afternoon spent among his breeding plots, she asked him, just before he retired, if he had any objections to her making certain extracts from the tables, for an uncle of hers. If not, she added, without the quiver of a lash, would he let her have the tables to work on that night?

"I'll promise faithfully to lock them up safely before I go to bed."

"Don't bother to do that," said he, drawing out once more the heap of well-thumbed, dog's-eared foolscap. "They'll be quite safe on the table."

Then the iron door swung noiselessly to, and the clink of metal announced to her disappointed ears that the combination was on.

This was the history of her operations up to the night of Francis Usher's

visit. Half an hour after his departure, and about the time she imagined he must have reached Greystone, she arose from the bench, and walked slowly up to the house. Entering, she passed quietly to her room, and, though it was nearly midnight, slipped on a dressing gown of her favorite color, pale blue, and a pair of Turkish slippers to match. After studying herself in the glass with the fine lack of self-consciousness possessed by actresses, she picked up a magazine, and started toward the study.

At the entrance she suddenly paused, and her steady-going heart struck two or three accelerated beats. The door of the safe, always the object of her first solicitous glance, stood ajar by about an inch!

Ten minutes later she drew out the coveted document, brittle and brown with age, and bearing on the outside an inscription in the quaint, shaded chirography of two generations before:

Agreement entered into this 5th day of May, 1852, between Uzziah B. Gaunt and Moses Clay, to wit, the repurchase of certain lands herein described.

Carefully repiacing all the other papers, Georgianna arose with a sigh of relief. Then, turning toward the table again, her face suddenly grew pale.

In the doorway, quietly watching her, stood Brandon Flenner and Virginia Hume. Flenner's face wore a shadowy, triumphant smile, but Virginia's was dark with anger, and she made a slight movement which called Georgianna's attention to the hunting crop in her hands.

For a moment there was a silence in which the beating of a heart might almost have been heard. Then Georgianna's lips curled in a scornful, defiant smile.

"I presume I owe this unexpected visit to your treacherous espionage, Miss Hume," said she tauntingly.

Virginia took three measured steps forward. For a moment the two splendid creatures faced each other like gladiators.

"Hand me that paper!" demanded Virginia.

For reply Georgianna, with a super-

cilious smile, opened the V-shaped neck of her dressing gown, and tucked the paper in her bosom. At almost the same instant Virginia swiftly raised her crop, and brought it down with a vicious smack. A blood-red welt leaped into visibility upon Miss Lighter's exposed neck. But she did not flinch.

"Strike again, Jezebel!" said she calmly. "You prove yourself your father's own child, for he, too, has struck me—he who sent me for this paper."

Flenner intervened.

"Will you surrender that paper, Miss Lighter, or will you force me to take it from you?"

"Would you do a woman violence?" asked Georgianna, with a sneer.

"When that woman is a thief—yes," he answered firmly.

Georgianna hesitated. She glanced desperately toward the windows, but the blinds were closed and latched. Her own careful hands had attended to that, lest she be seen by some chance passerby. Then she drew the agreement from its warm, scented nest, and, with a mocking bow, presented it to him, as if it were a favor at a dinner party.

"What next?" she asked, with a genial smile. "The patrol wagon?"

"Not yet," he answered significantly.

"Go dress yourself, and pack your belongings. I will then deliver you in my car at your master's door."

The woman hesitated.

"At this hour of the night?"

"Yes. One of your nocturnal habits is certainly not afraid of the dark."

"If need be, I will attest the innocence of your night junketing," interposed Virginia sarcastically.

"Thank you," returned Miss Lighter, with mock sweetness. "I wish I were in a position to do as much for you."

She disappeared in the direction of her room, the red brand upon her neck showing even more plainly from behind. For a moment Flenner and Virginia were silent.

"We have set our trap and caught our mouse," finally observed Virginia, with cheeks still flushed.

"And we did it with such a miserable

little bit of moldy cheese," added Flenner. "We now have it in our power to send her to the penitentiary. I think that will stay your father's hand. I wonder what he and Miss Lighter would think, were they informed of the worthlessness of that document which they strove so hard to get."

Virginia did not answer at once.

"How did it come about that your grandmother did not sign either copy?"

"It was drawn simply to satisfy a whim of Uz's. Everybody knew that he would never be in a position to buy back the land, and for that reason grandfather did not go to the trouble to have grandmother appear before the notary. Had Uz, by any chance, got together the money to buy back Meadow-rue, I have no doubt that grandfather would have stood by the agreement, just the same as if it had been legal. He was an honest man."

"I'm half sorry that I struck her now," mused Virginia. "My father is the real culprit. But if you were a girl, Brand, and a woman like that had come between you and your father, you would understand." Her nostrils twitched, and a mist dulled her unnaturally bright eyes. "She has done it so stealthily, so subtly. There has been nothing overt. She is not bad in the sense that I fancy many people believe her to be. If she were she would not be my father's secretary. It is just her atmosphere which has poisoned him. Our home is an unhappy place. I am almost thankful that mother was taken in time to miss it all."

"What will your father say when he hears of this?" asked Flenner.

"I do not know—I do not care. My duty was plain."

Flenner was silent for a moment. An emotion was tugging at his heart which he had long ignored as best he could, but to-night it overcame his better judgment.

"Virginia, if you are unhappy at home, do you think I could make you happy here?"

"Don't speak of that now," she pleaded. "I—I am not ready to answer. Father—I dare not abandon father yet."

CHAPTER VIII.

Early the next morning Georgianna astonished Hume by entering his office, where he and Usher were at work. The under secretary was at once dismissed, and Georgianna told her story. During its progress Aaron Hume's face grew blacker and blacker, and, when it was finished, he suddenly arose, clutched at an imaginary throat with fingers as rigid as talons, emitted a guttural, hardly human cry of rage, and then toppled over in an epileptic seizure.

Georgianna had seen him in this pitiable condition many times before. She knew just what to do. Quickly but calmly she ran for a glass of water, dashed it in his face, wiped the froth from his mouth with her handkerchief, and slipped a cushion beneath his head. Then she sat down, and waited until he was able to rise, after which she helped him to his room.

He returned some two hours later, haggard, with bloodshot eyes. Still weak from his attack, his hands shook noticeably; his wry lips were tightly compressed. His whole air suggested the red malignance of impotency. He did not speak for some time—merely gazed across the table at his secretary, at the mark of the lash across her neck. And as he looked it was as if a veil were slowly dropping across his face—an invisible veil, yet softening every harsh line.

"Things are not very clear to me yet," he finally observed, in a weak, thin voice. "You say you do not want me to say anything to Virginia?"

"Yes."

He thought again—laboriously, it seemed.

"Well, I don't know that there is anything to say. Now, let me get it straight. You say Flenner seized Virginia's whip, and struck you?"

Though she had lied about Flenner striking her, Georgianna suddenly buried her head in her arms and began to weep—not softly and noiselessly, as one would imagine a stoic such as she would weep, but with a wild abandon that fairly made the old man's skin

creep. Her sobs shook and wrenched her body pitilessly, and her wails, smothered though they were, made the big room fairly echo.

It was a strange and touching spectacle to Hume. In the years he had known her he had never seen her visibly swayed, much less conquered, by her emotions.

He now watched her in the throes of grief or wounded pride or outraged womanhood—whichever it might be—for what seemed a long time. Such a sight would ordinarily have whipped his nerves into raw ravelings, but now it had exactly the opposite effect. It quieted him like a dose of his favorite drug; it opened before his eyes a vista into an undiscovered country; it vouchsafed him a peep into a woman's heart.

"Georgia," observed Hume, when her sobbing had somewhat subsided, "I am sorry."

She did not lift her head, or make answer of any kind.

"Do you believe that I am sorry?" he asked, after another pause. "That I regret having forced you to undertake such a disastrous enterprise?"

Still she made no answer.

"I think you might answer me," he continued, not pleadingly, but with judicial calm. "I think you might give me an inkling of what is passing in your mind. I don't care whether it is favorable to me or not. I would simply like to know the facts."

She gave him a smothered answer.

"What is it?" he asked, bending nearer.

"I am sorry that I failed to carry out your wishes."

He passed a trembling hand across his forehead several times. Stirring the papers on his desk about, he dipped a pen, and wrote something. He pushed the slip of paper close to her arm, and then limped off to the elevator.

It is not likely that she was cognizant of his act. At least, she did not lift her head to read what was on the paper. A moment later Francis Usher, who had heard the elevator door close, entered the room. He crossed the thick rug to her side, and laid his hand upon her

head. But the words upon his tongue were checked by the sight of the bit of paper at her elbow. It was a check for one thousand dollars, payable to Georgianna Lighter.

He stood still for a moment, with a clouded brow. Then, moistening a forefinger with his tongue, he lifted the check without a sound, and walked away. Upon reaching his room, he reduced the valuable bit of blue paper to fragments, and tossed them into his wastebasket.

CHAPTER IX.

Hume, meanwhile, had stepped out into the grounds about the house.

Standing bareheaded, he gazed across the vale to the west. It was a beautiful prospect that lay unrolled before him, one for which Greystone was famous. He looked yearningly, wistfully. Nature had no message for him. Before her hills and valleys, trees and clouds, rivers and meadows, he stood as helpless as a chimney sweep before a page of hieroglyphics. But he knew that he was missing something, and had often wished that the scales might be brushed from his eyes. Nature gave other people comfort and pleasure, and he wished that she might give them to him. He needed such things, and of late was needing them more than ever. He had tried money, power, great possessions like Greystone, men and women; they had all turned to ashes on his hands.

He turned at the clatter of hoofs, and saw a handsome girl slip down from a black horse, and toss her reins to a liveried groom. But it was not until she faced him squarely that he recognized her as his daughter, Virginia. She was really handsomer than he had supposed—older, too—almost a woman. He paused to recall the year of her birth. Then his mind clapped sharply upon the events of the night before, over at Meadowrue farm.

"Virginia!" he called.

She, not having seen him, was moving away. At the sound of his voice she started—as much, perhaps, from astonishment at his presence in this place.

as from the sharp reminder his voice gave her of her share in the doings of the night before. She came up to him, however, with perfect composure.

It was not until this instant that Hume recalled Georgianna's request that he say nothing to Virginia of the happening over at Meadowrue. It was a request which had puzzled him, for it was extremely unlikely that Georgianna had any idea of shielding Virginia from her father's displeasure. Anyhow, now that his daughter had come before him so opportunely, Aaron dismissed Georgianna's wish as merely a woman's whim.

"Virginia, I forbade you, some time since, I think you will remember, to visit Meadowrue farm any more," he began.

"Yes, sir."

"Yet it appears that you were over there last night, and at a most unseemly hour."

"I was taken there, sir, by a most unseemly affair, the details of which I presume you are familiar with by this time."

"Will you inform me how you happened upon the scene at such an opportune moment?"

"I have nothing to conceal, father. Last Thursday I saw this woman——"

"Stop! I am tired of hearing you speak of my secretary as 'this woman,' and 'that woman,' as if she were a mere strumpet. Kindly call her 'Miss Lighter,' hereafter, at least in my presence."

Virginia laughed provokingly.

"What's in a name? I'll call her anything which pleases you, even 'Georgianna,' if you think it sounds better."

Hume eyed her sternly, but behind the sternness of the financier lay the admiration of a father for a fearless child.

"Go on with your story," he commanded briefly.

"Last Thursday evening I chanced to see Miss Lighter passing around the deer park, toward Meadowrue. My curiosity was aroused, and I watched her until she entered the farmhouse. You may imagine my astonishment.

When she did not reappear, and when I found that she had not been here for several days——"

"From whom did you learn that?" he asked sharply.

"From a person, confidentially, so that I can mention no name. I started to say that I was still more astonished. I suspected her business over there, and I put Mr. Flenner in possession of the facts."

"That hardly yet explains your appearance at just the—the opportune moment."

"She had worked on the little safe every night, trying to stumble onto the combination, and had watched it day and night, like a cat watching a mouse—presumably hoping to find it open some time. Consequently, the night that Brandon left it open purposely we knew about what would occur, and I was summoned to see the fun."

"Was that all you were there for?"

"No, sir. Brandon wanted me as a witness. You certainly can have no doubt, father, as to where I stand in this contest between you and Brandon Flenner. Your object is nothing less, in plain words, than to plunder him of his farm. And if you continue your operations I solemnly swear to you that we will place your petticoated coadjutor behind the bars."

Hume felt a smothering sensation in his chest, and a pressure as of an iron band around his head, the prelude to one of his paroxysms of fury. He heeded the warning, however, and wiped the dew from his brow; and when he had controlled himself sufficiently to speak, it was in a voice of surprising gentleness.

"Did you aid and abet Flenner in his blackguardly attack upon Georgianna with a hunting crop?"

"It was I, not Flenner, who struck her. Did she say it was Flenner?"

"I gained that impression. I certainly could not imagine my daughter doing such a brutal thing—while in her senses," he added.

The girl's cheeks grew crimson with anger.

"You talk as if she were an angel

from heaven, and I an imp who had splashed her spotless plumage with ink. Why do you side against your daughter in favor of a shameless, impudent hussy—a thief who should have had twenty stripes instead of one?" Tears unexpectedly filled her eyes. "Mark you, father, I predict the day will come when you will feel those sharp claws of hers."

"Never!" said he, with set teeth. "Never! Never! Pour no more of that poison into my ears!"

She turned to leave him, but he called her back.

"My daughter," said he, with a return of that meekness which had marked his demeanor earlier in the day, "I don't like to have you leave me in this spirit."

"I can show no other spirit, father, as long as you are bent upon doing what I regard as wrong."

"But I don't consider it wrong—and we must be our own judges. I'll admit that this business over at Meadowrue was questionable, very questionable. It was worse—it was a tactical error. But I was only trying to repair an accident that had happened to Uz Gaunt; namely, the loss of his copy of that agreement. The rest of it is only the game of business, played according to rule. Flenner is holding out against me only to extort money—as everybody else does when they find I want a thing. Shall I tamely submit—play a give-away game?"

"There is no use in our arguing the matter, father. I know that Brandon is not an extortioner. He doesn't want to part with his farm at any price. If he had wanted to, he would have accepted your liberal offer long ago."

With a sigh he turned from her, and mounted toward the only spot in the house that he could truly call home—and toward the only person who seemed to understand him.

CHAPTER X.

When Hume reached his office his spirits were somewhat raised by the sight of Georgianna standing at a western window, slowly and reflectively smoking a cigarette. He had been somewhat anxious as to the outcome of



She stepped into the road now, halted a moment, as if in doubt as to her course, and then set off toward Greystone at a swift pace.

her recent outburst. He was also pleased to see that his check had disappeared. He had more than half expected to find it on his side of the table; for, while Georgianna unscrupulously accepted costly gifts from him, such as clothes and jewels, he knew her to be a woman who would not accept money or its equivalent as a recompense for an injury. He had given the check in the only acceptable way in which it could be given, silently, unobtrusively, without explanations, and he had expected her to accept it, if she accepted it at all, in the same manner.

From her window Georgianna could see the big brick home on Meadowrue farm. She saw herself making cookies and feeding the chickens—things in which she had taken genuine enjoyment. But she also saw herself in Flenner's study, night after night, trying the safe, exploring the receptacles of his private papers, hearkening guiltily for the footstep which might come upon her at any moment.

These things were bad enough, but when she reflected upon the manner in which she had been tricked, how Flenner must have inwardly smiled each time she had asked for those genealogical tables, and finally how he and Virginia Hume must have watched her on that last fatal night, exchanging smiles, perhaps, and waiting until

they could brand her a thief—when she reflected on these things her cheeks burned with a shame she had never known before. Then had come the lash, from a whip meant for a horse!

But of the two, she hated Virginia more; first, perhaps, because she was a woman, and a good woman; secondly, because it was she who had betrayed the plot to Flenner, and had struck her with a whip.

Yet it was revenge upon Flenner of which she was thinking now. She could strike him more easily, more in the open, for he was Hume's enemy as well as hers. But Virginia! She was Hume's daughter. The stroke for her would have to be far more subtly planned, and more carefully executed. It might be years before the moment arrived when she could, figuratively, drive her stiletto into Virginia's heart.

But the day would arrive, and she would as surely make the strike as if it were on this day.

She finally turned from the window.

"What will be your next step in the purchase of Meadowrue farm?" she asked quietly, as if taking up the business of the day.

"I don't know," answered Hume.

"I have been intimately associated with you for five years, Mr. Hume," she answered. "I have been in with you on deals involving millions. But I never before heard you say 'I don't know.' Yet the matter under our hands is the securing of a three-hundred-and-twenty-acre farm."

"Yes. It's odd." He spoke without his old ardor. "They seem, however, to have taken the last trick."

"What do you mean, exactly?"

"I mean that they have evidence against you which, if they choose to prosecute, will land you in the penitentiary."

"I must say you look at the matter coolly. The other day there was no danger; I could not be detected unless I bungled, and if I were detected your millions would be back of me. Dare you say that I bungled?"

"No."

"Dare you say that I should have failed had it not been for the treachery of one of your own household?"

"No."

"Do you think, then, that I'm fool enough to believe that the penitentiary gate gapes for me alone? Am I the only guilty one?"

"I didn't imply that, Georgia. Legally, I am *particeps criminis*. Morally, I am more than that. I planned the affair, I sent you into it against your will and your better judgment. But if I am content, for the reason named, to give up present attempts to secure the farm, why should you object?"

She fixed a pair of blazing, tigerish eyes upon him.

"Because I want vengeance, Aaron Hume. And I'll have it—with your aid or without it."

"Vengeance is a poor thing to strive for, Georgianna. After you've got it, it is worth nothing. It is then that remorse begins. I never spent a minute of my life in planning revenge, unless

there were something more tangible attached to it."

"You've never worn a red welt around your neck, like the collar of a serf," she retorted hotly.

Aaron eyed her thoughtfully. Coolly as he himself could stab an enemy in the financial arena, tenacious as he was in pursuit of his desires, there was something in the beautiful, impassioned face before him, a green, venomous gleam of the eye, which made him uncomfortable.

"Do you intend to help me?" she demanded.

Her tone roused the old, the real Aaron Hume.

"In the first place, let us not reverse our position—let us not forget who is employer, and who is employed." There was no doubting his tone. "In the second place, don't be a baby. If you were struck, remember the provocation. What mercy could you expect? Wake up, and get a little sense. In all our experience together, I have never seen you make such a fool of yourself, or lose your equilibrium, like a nervous old maid."

She became silent, as always, under his tongue lashings, and after a moment he added:

"When the time comes to act against Flenner, you will find me ready, with shotguns; but just at present we might as well admit gracefully that he has the upper hold. Another thing is: We start for San Francisco day after to-morrow—all three of us—and we'll have other things to think of than this accursed Greystone and its attachments."

CHAPTER XI.

For nearly three weeks the somber apartments on the fourth floor of Greystone were left to solitude and the dancing motes of dust, the latter visible only where a javelin of light pierced the dusk of drawn curtains. Then, one afternoon, Aaron's limousine, the only one of his half dozen cars in which he ever rode, rolled noiselessly down the cement incline and disappeared through the sunken arch.

A change had taken place in Hume, as he knew well. His health was worse than usual. But a greater change had taken place in Georgianna. Throughout their long journeying to and fro and their stay in the West, she had withheld herself from him in some subtle way. Just how, he could not have said. There was nothing tangible, nothing that could be complained of by the spoken word.

Shortly after lunch, on the day after the trio's arrival, the little but costly French motor which Hume had provided for Georgianna's exclusive use, stood in the porte-cochère. Presently its owner, veiled and gloved, took her place at the steering wheel. She was regarded as a rather reckless driver, and, as she spun around the circle connecting with the main driveway, Anthony, an old gardener, shook his head ominously, and watched her until she quickly disappeared.

A few yards on the near side of the exit from the grounds, she slowed down, and finally stopped the machine. Francis Usher, with a rather obvious attempt of having appeared by chance, strolled out of a bank of shrubbery which had effectually concealed him, and stepped into the car. It was not often that the two secretaries were on leave at the same time. But Hume had spent the night before in fighting his devil of insomnia, and was now in a profound slumber, induced by morphine.

"I gave him an extra grain," observed Georgianna casually to Usher. "It was either sleep or hysteria for him."

The car bowled along the splendid road built by the master of Greystone, until it reached the gate of Meadowrue farm. Georgianna momentarily halted the car. Flenner's wheat, just beginning to incline its multitudinous heads, heavy with fatness, stretched away, acre upon acre, to the south and west—a pastel by Nature, a picture to make one hunger for land. As the breeze wrinkled its shimmering surface, Usher uttered an exclamation of pleasure.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" observed Miss Lighter, slightly narrowing her lids. "Useful, too. This young fellow Flen-

ner is what the agricultural journals call a wizard—a kind of understudy of Luther Burbank, I take it. After some years of experimentation, he has developed a new variety of wheat which is much superior to any other known variety. That's going some, when you stop to think of it. He told me—and backed his words with figures—that land sowed with this wheat would yield two dollars an acre more than if ordinary varieties were used."

"That's certainly worth working for," interposed Usher, with admiring eyes.

"Every bushel that he is willing to spare was contracted for over a year ago. He gave me the estimated returns from the crop, provided the weather is favorable. Guess what it is."

"I haven't the vaguest idea," answered Usher. "Those things go by favor."

"Fifty thousand dollars," said she.

She rested her elbow on the wheel so as to face her companion. Then she laid her gloved hand upon his knee, and he noted with surprise that her lips were twitching.

"Frank!" She paused. "That's his estimate. My estimate is just fifty thousand dollars less. I intend to destroy that wheat. If I have my will not one of those millions of heads will ever be threshed."

Usher gazed at her in amazement.

"You—you can't do it," he stammered out.

"I can."

"But why should you want to?"

"Because I hate Brandon Flenner. Because he struck me across my bare neck with a whip meant for a horse." It was her second lie about the incident.

Usher still stared at her uncomprehendingly. Then she told him, for the first time, and against Hume's express command, the outcome of her adventure in Meadowrue farmhouse. She spoke quickly and dramatically, so that the tale lost nothing in the telling.

"That red mark on your neck was caused by his crop, instead of a curling iron, as you told me?" he asked incredulously.

"Yes. I haven't used a curling iron since you and I were clerks together. Poor, blind man!" she added, with a peculiar lighting of her eyes.

"The scoundrel!" he exclaimed, in a voice thick with rage. "But how can you destroy his crop?"

"Wait!"

She turned the car into a narrow, unfenced, grass-grown road, which led off to the north, along the backbone of a respectable ridge—the ridge, in fact, which separated the two arms of the Pecatonica delta. After jolting along for perhaps a mile, which placed them on the highest point of the ridge, Georgianna stopped the car. Behind them, like a pearl upon the neck of beauty, lay the opalescent waters of Lake Pecatonica. In front of them lay a much smaller and shallower body of water, grown up with wild rice.

"Hebron reservoir!" announced the young woman, with a wave of her arm. "Notice the V-shaped dam, with the point of the V meeting this ridge, where it dwindles to a mere spit. The land to the east of us, controlled by one wing of the dam, belongs to Greystone; the land to the west, to Meadowrue. Before that dam was built, the waters of one branch flowed over the sunken garden of Greystone; the other, over what is now the wheat fields of Meadowrue. The latter shall flow again. Dynamite shall be the agent, and I have selected you to apply it!"

Her breath quickened a little, her cheeks crimsoned. But Usher gasped, and turned pale.

"Me!"

"Yes, you."

"To loose those waters, and wipe out all that beautiful wheat, and perhaps drown some innocent person? Never! You must be mad."

She gazed into his eyes with the curious effect of trying to read his very soul.

"I am mad, perhaps. I have suffered enough to make a woman mad. But my only cure is those waters, let loose, raging over Brandon Flenner's land."

"You have endured much," he answered earnestly. "Give me the word,

and I'll gladly horsewhip Flenner on sight. But to dynamite that dam!" He shuddered, and gazed at her again, as if to make sure that she was sane. "That would be monstrous. That would be unworthy of you. The blow would strike too many besides him—his mother, the farm hands thrown out of work, and every man who has bought a bushel of that wheat. Yes, every man who would benefit by Flenner's years of experimentation."

"Am I listening to the man who a short time since confessed his love for me?" she asked tauntingly.

"I do love you. I'm showing it now."

"That is not my idea of love," she answered coldly. "A love that calculates, that casts up debits and credits, is not the love for me."

"I am casting up no such things," he protested vigorously. "I am thinking only of you. You are in Flenner's power, if he chooses to prosecute you. Should this dam be blown, your complicity in the crime would be at once suspected."

"It would not. The water is high. Flenner spoke anxiously of it to me several times, when I was at his house, and once he rode out to inspect the dam, which is old, and has had no repairs for years. It was this very fact which suggested the idea to me. No one would know whether it had been blown, or whether it had succumbed to the extra pressure."

"Don't deceive yourself, Georgia," he pleaded. "A thousand unsuspected threads connect every criminal with his crime. The truth would out. I repeat again, your complicity would be at once suspected. Flenner, thirsting for vengeance, would pursue you relentlessly, and in the end he would get you. You have put yourself in his hands, just as I warned you that you might. Under the circumstances it is madness for you to attempt this thing, through me or any one else."

"Do you refuse to do the work?" she asked obdurately.

"I do," he answered firmly.

"The truth is, you are a coward! I have always believed you one—and show me a woman who loves a coward. More than that, you are an ingrate. All that you are, you owe to me. I fished you out of a stuffy cubby-hole in the rear of a wholesale rubber house, where you were making twenty dollars a week. I got you a place at forty a week, and you are now making sixty. Yet you have not been an efficient servant of your employer. I have stood between you and dismissal on more than one occasion. You are not of the stuff that men like Aaron Hume tie to. You asked me to marry you, saying that you would liberate me from what you call our slavery." Her voice trembled with scorn. "I did not refuse you—I asked only for time. I was not sure of you, and now I discover of what crumbling stuff you are made."

Her words burned him to the core. He was not a brave man, and he knew it.

Moreover, her reference to Aaron Hume had awakened in him a demon whose stirrings he had before been conscious of—the demon of jealousy. She had detected this weakness in him, and during the weeks that she had contemplated her revenge she had played upon it with the consummate skill of a coquette. Yet at the proper moment she had always relented, and had cheered him with a word or a glance.

On the way home he was the victim of bitter reflections. The poison she had so skillfully instilled was working in his veins; and that it might work the better she spoke no word to him.

The car finally turned in between the granite pillars of the entrance to Grey-stone.

"Georgia," asked Usher impulsively, "if I do this thing for you, what shall be my reward?"

"Your reward!" she repeated scornfully. "Does love barter, like a Baxter Street Jew? What is your faith in me, if you are to bind me with pledges, as you would a stranger? I will promise you no reward—not because I am unwilling to, but because true love demands no reward."

He said no more until they alighted from the car, a moment later.

"Georgia, though I would rather cut off my right hand than do this thing, because I see its iniquity, yet for your sake I will do it. And I ask no reward. My reward shall be your gratitude alone, expressed or unexpressed."

She stood in indecision for a moment. Then she swiftly pressed his hand, and disappeared in the house.

He remained outside a moment longer, a melancholy figure—a man who had sold his soul.

CHAPTER XII.

Brandon Flenner, for the next two days after Georgianna's exposure, spent most of his time in a brown study. It seemed to him that he had stood on the defensive long enough. He could strike now, and strike effectually. Yet he did not want to deliver his blow prematurely. Again, sending a young woman to the penitentiary was not a pleasant thing to contemplate; it was not certain, in spite of the justice of the case, that he could do it, for Hume would back the defendant with his great influence; and, if the prosecution failed, Flenner would have fired his heaviest shot in vain.

As a means, however, of clearing the ground for some definite action, he rode over to Uz Gaunt's shanty, on the third morning after his encounter with Georgianna.

Uz was languidly chopping wood back of his cabin, in preparation of breakfast, though it was past nine o'clock.

"Uz, I want to have a talk with you," began Brandon decisively.

"All right, Brandy," answered Uz. He was mellow, but not drunk.

"I hear that you have sold your harness buckle," said Flenner abruptly. "I understand you're to get a small fortune for it."

"Who was tellin' you that?" demanded Uz, with a start.

"Mr. Whately. You probably know him. He's an attorney for Mr. Hume,



At each flash of lightning, the buggy was farther ahead than before, carrying with it the dearest object on earth to the crazed pursuer.

the gentleman who is buying your buckle," answered Flenner blandly.

The old man lit his cigar slowly and thoughtfully, with a perplexed face.

"I thought—I thought that war to be a secret 'tween them and me."

"Secrets have a way of leaking out. I also understand that you are going to take the money and buy back Meadowrue farm. Of course, I haven't been consulted, but that's the story."

"Who in hell told you that?" bellowed Uz furiously.

"I also understand that after you have bought the farm you will sell it to Mr. Hume."

Uz's swarthy face became blank with astonishment.

"Why, Brandy," he began uncertainly, for he was not practiced in duplicity, "everybody knows you wouldn't

sell Meadowrue, after what Mr. Hume offered you fer it."

"You could buy it, if you had the money and a certain agreement entered into years ago, between you and my grandfather. Unfortunately for you, you haven't that agreement—probably lit your pipe with it one day when you were out of matches, and too tipsy to know just what you were doing. I say 'unfortunately,' for if you had preserved your copy of that agreement you wouldn't have been tempted to enter my house in the middle of the night, like a thief, trying to find my copy."

"Who says I done that?" blustered Gaunt.

"The thing for you to worry over is not who says you did it, but the fact that you did it. Burglary isn't a neighborly act."

"Twa'n't burglary. I didn't break any fastenin's. The door was wide open."

"We'll let a jury decide that, Uz. That is, in case the attempt to confiscate my farm is carried any further. Now let me tell you something, Uz, and it will pay you to prick up your ears while I talk. I want you to make a definite selection of your friends, right now, before I leave. Select either the old or the new. Choose Hume, if you want to, who will throw you away like a squeezed lemon when he's done with you, or choose me. If you are not my friend, I shall consider you as an enemy. As my enemy, I shall visit the penalty of the law upon you for any misdeeds in the past. As my enemy, never again trespass on my place, especially in the night, unless you wish to carry off a load of shot somewhere in your anatomy. Never again ask me for a dime, or a job, or a morsel of food, or a load of wood. Stay here, and starve, and freeze, like the rat you have shown yourself to be. Do you get my meaning?" He spoke calmly, and all the more cuttingly thereby.

"Why, Brandy, nuther your father nor your grandfather ever talked to me like this in all their lives," snuffled Uz.

"No, because you never betrayed them as you have me. Don't whimper. It's too late for that. But, before you make your decision, let me put you in possession of one more fact. That agreement, which tempted you to the commission, I presume, of the first crime of your life, is not worth the paper it is written on. It was never signed by my grandmother."

Uz's eyes opened wide.

"Brandy, I can't believe that. I can't believe your grandfather would have deceived me so."

"He didn't. He simply knew that you would never be able to buy Meadowrue back, and for that reason he didn't take the trouble to haul grandmother over to Hebron, to put her signature to the paper. But I can assure you that if an inscrutable providence had put you in a way to buy the farm back, either in my grandfather's, or my

father's, or my lifetime, that defect in the instrument would never have stood in your way. But you didn't want to buy it back this time; you were in no position to do so; you simply wanted to betray me for a price."

The old man smoked in silence, his usual care-free face clouded over.

"Brandy," he observed at last, "I ain't felt as mean sence my father thrashed me, before company, when I was a gawky, sixteen-year-old boy, for settin' my bull pup onto a pore little span'el that belonged to the company. In this fight 'tween you and Hume, I was really fer you, fer he tried to buy my land, same as yours, and you know I swore to my wife, on her dyin' bed, I'd never sell it. I was jist weak, Brandy. They offered me a thousand dollars fer my part, and they told me to steal that agreement. I suppose they done that to shet my mouth. The money did look big to me. It would 'a' bought a thousand bottles of booze, though I didn't cal'late to spend it all that way. I was goin' to make some repairs hyar. I'm sorry, Brandy. I'm fer you, from now on, through thick and thin. There's my hand, if you care to take it."

Flenner grasped the huge, grimy member.

"Very well. I don't think those people will bother you any more. I have a card up my sleeve. But if they do approach you, don't talk to them. Just get up and walk away. Now I'll give you a job driving a reaper when we cut wheat, which will be in about six days. You used to be the best driver in this county, and I need good men this year. I don't want to start cutting until the last minute, and then I want to work fast."

CHAPTER XIII.

It came about one night soon after that four people left Greystone stealthily, each taking his own direction, and without any knowledge, except in one instance, of the others' movements.

This coincidence was partly due to the fact that truth, like murder, will out. Often, as in the present instance, it is

through such devious and circumlocutory channels, and guided and propelled by such insignificant, casual, or accidental incidents, that one wonders how it ever arrived. Yet it does arrive—not now and then, but regularly, almost always.

Two days before, Francis Usher was riding out from the city in a railway coach. At his feet was a package, wrapped in green paper, tied with a heavy cord, and so knotted and looped as to form a handle—indicating that the package might have considerable weight. Yet, from the extreme care with which Usher deposited it on the floor, and saw that there was plenty of space between it and the steam pipes, one would have surmised that its contents were very fragile.

As the train rushed along, the secretary suddenly recalled that he had not notified any one at Greystone of his coming; there would consequently be no vehicle at Hebron station to meet him, and as the distance from Hebron to Greystone was seven miles, walking was out of question—particularly with a package as heavy as the one at his feet. It was therefore necessary for him to send a telegram for a vehicle from some station.

He was loath, however, to leave his package behind him, and equally loath to carry it with him.

He glanced about him in perplexity. Across the aisle sat a venerable Irishman, with a shaven upper lip, and a band of whiskers around his chin. Usher had never seen him before, but if he were a resident of Hebron, the chances were a thousand to one that he knew who Usher was, in which case the latter did not care to approach him.

When the conductor came through the coach the next time, however, he paused before the benevolent-faced old Mile-sian, and observed:

"Been away from Emerald Grove long, Patrick?"

"I lift there this mornin' at nine-tin, and I'll be back there, the saints willin', at three-twenty-foive. I don't look for much change in the place, to be sure," he added, with a chuckle.

When the conductor passed on, Usher slipped across the aisle into the old man's seat.

"Pardon me, but it's necessary for me to leave the train at the next station to send a telegram. Would you mind watching that green package there on the floor, and seeing that nobody enters my seat? That package contains a highly dangerous explosive," he added, by way of explanation. "It is produced by a factory in which I am interested. It is still in an experimental stage, and I'm taking it to an authority on explosives for test and analysis."

"Certainly, sor," answered Patrick, twitching his hat brim. "I haven't the fear of dynamite that some has. I worked in a quarry twenty-foive years, and it's me that would be there yit, barrin' my rheumatism. May I ask where your chimist lives? I know of none meself short of Canton."

Usher hesitated an instant. Then, remembering that the old man would leave the train before he himself would, he felt safe in answering: "That's where I am bound—to Canton."

The simple incident, nevertheless, had set his fingers to trembling. When he reentered the coach, after dispatching his message, he saw that Patrick had a seatmate—possibly some one whom he had kept out of the seat he was guarding. Usher did not know the newcomer, and so dismissed the matter from his mind.

The newcomer, however, in spite of Usher's ignorance of him, lived in Hebron. His name was Bates, but, for some unknown cause, everybody called him "Pigeon." He had not been headed off from Usher's seat, but had sat down with Patrick because he knew him. Presently, in the course of conversation which followed, Patrick, pricked on by pride over the trust reposed in him by a gentleman, related the incident to Pigeon, in a cautiously lowered voice.

"I know him well, Pat," answered Pigeon, not to be outdone. "He's Aaron Hume's private secretary, and Aaron Hume is worth fifty million dollars—some say a hundred million. More than that, I know Mr. Hume's

daughter, Virginia," continued Bates, in a manner calculated to annihilate Patrick's pride. "More than that, she comes to my house almost every week, and brings flowers, and fruits, and nuts, and toys, and things you never seen or heard of for my little lame Lucy."

The next forenoon Virginia Hume chanced to call at the humble home of Pigeon Bates, though she had not been there for over two weeks. Mr. Bates, who was nearly always at home, smoking or reading on the front porch, while Mrs. Bates was bent over a washtub in the rear, told Virginia the story of Usher and his explosive.

Pigeon's chatter slipped from Virginia's mind like rain from a window light. For all that she knew, her father owned half a dozen dynamite or nitroglycerin plants, and Usher's presence on the train with a package of explosive had no significance for her.

Then an odd thing happened. As she canted down the driveway at Grey-stone, she came upon two people—a man and a woman—sitting on a bench, with their backs toward her, and bending over a sheet of paper on the woman's knees. Across the sheet was a figure so heavily scored by repeated marks of a pencil that Virginia, at a distance of thirty feet, recognized it as a blunt V.

She nodded to the pair as she passed by. Usher raised his hat, but Georgi-anna Lighter gave her a cold, vacant stare.

At that instant there took place in Virginia's mind a process for which she was no more responsible than for a dream. That blank stare of Georgi-anna's, her attempted theft of the document from Flenner's safe, the V-shaped diagram on her lap, and Bates' story of Usher and his package of explosive were suddenly fitted together like the pieces of a puzzle. And the key to the puzzle were Bates' closing words:

"Of course, Mr. Usher was just stringin' old Pat about goin' on to Canton to see a chemist, for he got off the train at Hebron, the same as I did."

For an instant, the plot stood revealed like a landscape lit by a flash of

lightning. Then darkness fell over it again. It was too bizarre, too fantastic, too monstrous, too cruel for credibility. That her father, or Francis Usher, either, would be a party to such a diabolical conspiracy was utterly unbelievable. Yet, in spite of reason, the strange revelation stuck in her mind like an ugly dream.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was the next night that Francis Usher, at a little after nine o'clock, left the house by a side door. The door issued from a wing of the house which was least used, being occupied by the library and picture gallery. He wore a soft felt hat, instead of his customary Panama, and carried a small leather bag. He at once plunged into one of the main shrubberies on the place, and followed a path toward the shore.

Any one about the house who might have chanced to see him would have supposed, quite naturally, that he was going to take a launch for the head of the lake, from which point he could reach, by means of a thirty-minute trolley ride, the C. & D. Railroad.

Usher, however, ran very little risk of being seen, as he passed down the gloomy shrubbery. Just before he reached the pier, he turned to the left, crossed a wide expanse of lawn, and was soon swallowed up by the forest. He then turned still farther to the left, until he was going due north, or opposite the direction he had set out in.

A ten minutes' walk brought him to the public highway. Dark as it was, he listened carefully for any vehicles, hurriedly crossed the road, and, with a sigh of relief, plunged into the gloomy forest on the other side. He next veered still farther to the left, into a northwesterly course, and presently he felt beneath his feet the damp, spongy soil which still characterized the strip of land which was once the eastern branch of the Pecatonica River. He was now only about a mile from the Hebron dam.

Three or four minutes after Usher had crossed the main road, a dark figure emerged from the black fence-row

shadows. It was the figure of a woman—of a woman who had followed Usher from the moment he left the house. She stepped into the road now, halted a moment, as if in doubt as to her course, and then set off toward Greystone at a swift pace.

Meanwhile, Aaron Hume and Georgianna were hard at work, on the top floor of their wing. It had been one of the best days, physically, that Hume had had in weeks, and that, too, with a minimum of morphine. Not in many months had his daily allotment of the drug been so small. He had said nothing to Georgianna of any attempt to wean himself from the habit, but he had been telling her each day, with apparent pleasure, just how many grains he had consumed. The amount was much less than he had been accustomed to.

Georgianna was not, however, much interested in the matter to-night. Her mind, and her heart, too, for that matter, were full of vastly weightier considerations. The hour of her carefully planned vengeance was at hand. At this moment Usher, so far as she knew, was placing his dynamite cartridge, connecting the necessary wires, etc.

Every precaution had been taken to make the destruction of the dam appear accidental. She hoped and believed that the explosion, taking place under water, would make little noise, and this little noise was to be made when the fewest people would be likely to hear it, some time between twelve and one o'clock.

Usher had asked for two days' leave, and the bag with which he had walked out of the office, after saying good-by to Hume and Georgianna, was supposed to contain fresh linen, and other toilet accessories. After the explosion he was to haul in his wires, stow them in his bag, and, with a fishing outfit which he had concealed near the road, was to make for Algonquin Lake. Some time between daylight and nine o'clock, Georgianna would pick him up in her car, and deliver him at the hotel in proper manner.

But, in spite of all these precautions,

the woman to-night felt, for the first time in her life, something like fear. Her conscienceless act would rouse the countryside to fury, if discovered not to be accidental. The law would stretch out its long arm for the criminals.

But more than popular fury and the penalty of the law she dreaded Aaron Hume's anger. "The public be damned!" was not his motto. He sinned against the people often enough, but always in private, if possible. He was not, in any sense, a man to be trifled with. Great as was her influence over him, there was always a point beyond which she would have no more attempted to defy his will than she would have plunged into a jungle, single-handed, to slay a lion.

As the little time-flier on the table flung off the minutes, one by one, with its celluloid leaves, she began to grow nervous—somewhat to her own dismay. Her cheeks, usually of a marblelike pallor, began to take on color, until they were painted with a central crimson patch, from which little pink tongues shot forth toward her temples.

"What's the matter with you, Georgia?" asked Hume. "You look as if you had a fever. Let me feel your hand."

But she laughed playfully, and put her hands behind her.

"Oh, I never allow a gentleman to hold my hand under any circumstances!" she exclaimed, almost hilariously.

Then she glanced at the little brass clock again. It was just ten o'clock. It would be two hours, at least, before Usher would send the fatal spark flying along his two hundred feet of copper wire, toward the deadly cartridge.

Then, as she looked up into the magistrate's commanding gray eyes, something happened to her. She lost her nerve! She decided, without an instant's consideration, to throw herself, figuratively, into his arms for protection. But she also resolved not to let him defeat her vengeance by staying Usher's hand.

"Mr. Hume," said she calmly, "I have something to tell you."



"Brandon, I believe that they are going to dynamite the Hebron dam to-night!"

"I was beginning to suspect that you had," he answered, with his shrewd smile.

"You will remember that after that miserable affair over at Meadowrue farmhouse, I asked you what further action you were going to take against Flenner, either in the way of securing his farm, or of avenging me."

The financier pricked up his ears, but merely nodded.

"I saw that the matter was up to me, and I planned accordingly. To-night Brandon Flenner and I will even scores, with possibly a balance in my favor. Before to-morrow morning four-fifths of his famous crop of wheat will be fit only for hog feed."

Hume was not an easily startled man, and he did not start now. But his lips tightened, and his eyes grew stern.

"By what means?" he asked calmly.

"By the dynamiting of the west wing of Hebron dam," she answered, with just a perceptible touch of pallor.

He was silent for a moment.

"Is that the reason why Usher is not here to-night?"

"You're a good guesser. I could not have picked a safer tool, could I?"

Hume guessed again, and as shrewdly as before. He guessed that she had discovered the forged check which he kept in his private safe.

"At what hour will this—this event take place?" he asked finally.

For a moment she was tempted to lie to him—to name ten-thirty as the hour, so that he might be led to believe that it was already too late for intervention. The face of the time-flier now indicated ten-twenty.

"Tell me the truth!" he commanded, as if looking into her soul.

"Twelve o'clock—between twelve and one."

He rose, and started for the private telephone which, by means of a little switch-board on the wall, reached the stables, garage, boathouse, the lodge, the greenhouse, and the half dozen tenant houses on the great estate.

Georgianna leaped to her feet, and planted herself between him and the instrument.

"What are you going to do?" she demanded hoarsely.

"I am going to stop this nefarious business."

"Give it up—give up that purpose, or give me up!" she cried defiantly. "Touch that phone, Aaron Hume, and in an hour I shall have left your house forever."

He smiled incredulously.

"In the dead of night?"

"Yes. If you think so little of me as not only to refuse to resent an insult to my womanhood, but to refuse to let me resent it myself, I am done with you, Aaron Hume. I shall flee from your presence—forever."

"Alone?" he asked skeptically.

"No—with a man who loves me—

who loves me enough to do for me this thing which you hypocritically denounce as nefarious."

The millionaire's countenance darkened.

"You won't fly far with him. I have a pair of shears which will clip his wings."

"I defy you to use them," she flung back fearlessly.

"Most people have not found me backward in accepting a challenge," he answered threateningly.

"Then accept this one."

Her flashing eyes burned into his like a searchlight.

The man of millions contemplated her statuesque, intrepid figure, slender, but with the slenderness of the leopard. He contemplated her hot, violet eyes, the narrow line of her carmine lips, the outstretched arm, resting lightly on the shelf of the telephone, but forming a barrier between him and the outside world.

"I submit," said he slowly, as if he felt the virtue oozing from his veins. "You shall have your own way. I shall stand by you to the best of my ability. But, Georgianna," he added, almost tenderly, "we have done a sinful thing to-night. Let me have the phone."

She withdrew her arm. He slipped a plug into a hole marked "Stable," and took down the receiver.

"Adkins?" he spoke, after a moment's wait. "Adkins, get up a horse and single buggy immediately. I must catch the fast mail to the city, and, as it doesn't stop at Hebron, I shall have to drive to Wayne City. And, Adkins! This is a matter which you will know nothing about should you ever be questioned. Drive over to Hebron in the morning with one of the boys. Send him back, take the train to Wayne City, and bring the rig back yourself."

He turned to Georgianna.

"We shall be in the city by three o'clock. Nobody will know what time we get there, and a week or a month hence, or whenever an investigation of this affair is started—if it ever is started—nobody will know or remember whether we had been in the city one,

two, or three days. At least, those who do know will have a bad memory."

He paused, and looked into her eyes.

"Or, it may turn out that neither you nor I know anything about this job. It may turn out to have been the unadvised act of a certain safe and trusty man, who hoped to win favor with a certain woman by avenging an insult she once received."

She caught his meaning, but for an instant she, even she, refused to acknowledge the fact by so much as the wavering of an eyelash. Then fear, or a prophetic glimpse into a splendid future, or whatever it might have been, conquered.

"I understand," said she softly.

CHAPTER XV.

At about this moment Francis Usher was kneeling on the ground, in the midst of a thicket, at a point some two hundred feet south of the apex of Hebron dam. By the aid of a thin pencil of light from his bull's-eye lantern, he carefully lifted from his bag one article after another of his deadly paraphernalia, and spread them on the ground, preliminary to making the proper connections. Then he peered into the empty bag again and again, and swept its leather lining and its pockets with his fingers. A look of dismay came over his face. He had forgotten his wire-cutting pliers, a tool simply indispensable for the work before him.

He glanced at his watch. It was just ten-thirty. He had been over an hour, in the darkness, in making the trip up. It would be after twelve by the time he could get back with the pliers, and how long he would be in assembling the unfamiliar outfit he did not know.

He started. He could not go to his room for the pliers he had bought in the city. Hume would see him. He would therefore have to filch a pair from the garage or the stable. A drizzling rain had set in, and for a moment the man, none too hardy at best, sat down, unstrung and depressed. But the reward for which he was working was a magnificent one, and Georgianna's last

words: "Remember, Frank, I shall be with you in spirit, if not in body!" converted his weakness into strength. He rose, and started back through the pitch-dark wood, staggering like a drunken man over the treacherous footing.

Upon reaching the highway, he cautiously paused, as before. At the sound of wheels his heart fluttered, and he hastily drew back into a covert of bushes. By this time it was raining steadily, with an occasional flash of lightning; and just before the vehicle came opposite him, a very vivid flash presented a phosphorescent, spectral world to his eyes. He stiffened, as if the bolt had run down his spine, or as if the earth, in that instant, had opened and exposed her countless dead. But it was two living faces in the buggy—Aaron Hume's and Georgianna Lighter's—which had been imprinted upon his brain in lines of fire.

Had he paused to reason, he would have found it hard to explain the presence of these two people in a buggy, close to the midnight hour, in a rain-storm, with Aaron Hume himself at the lines. But he did not pause to reason. He instinctively felt himself betrayed; the devil of jealousy gripped his heart, and he became as a madman.

Springing from his hiding place, he darted after the buggy, with gritted teeth and clenched fists. He repressed the shrieks which rose to his lips, for they would but have warned his victim. He wanted to fall upon the abductor of his sweetheart as a lion falls upon its prey, to throttle him, to toss his body overboard, seize the lines with one hand, with the other embrace his dear one—and then drive madly on, anywhere or everywhere.

But Greystone horses were bought for speed, and the one attached to the buggy moved swiftly along, in spite of darkness and rain. Usher's eyes were of little use, except now and then. So, guided only by the splashing of the wheels in the wet gravel, and the sloppy clip-clop of the horse's hoofs, he stumbled, staggered, fell into the ditch first on one side, then the other, cutting his

hands, scratching his face on brambles, and coating his clothes with mud. At each flash of lightning, the buggy was farther ahead than before, carrying with it the dearest object on earth to the crazed pursuer.

Finally he fell, and did not get up. Panting, sobbing like a child, he lay on the drenched grass for some time, indifferent to the rain, his cuts and bruises, almost to life itself.

Presently, however, he arose, and set his face toward Greystone. He neither loitered nor ran, but walked swiftly, decisively; and a chance spectator would have descried by the shimmering lights from above a set, determined, haggard, half-insane face, with black hair streaming down into a pair of wild eyes. The spectator would have shrunk out of sight, for the man in the road looked as if he were bent upon an evil deed.

CHAPTER XVI.

The occupants of the buggy rode on, unconscious of their sinister pursuer. They paid little attention to the rain; not so much because they were booted and curtained against its assault, as because they were people who, by temperament and training, never allowed trifles to annoy them or to turn them from their course.

Now and then Georgianna glanced at the gray patch beside her, which was Hume's face. She was seeing a side of him which had hitherto been veiled from her eyes—namely, his physical prowess. She knew his moral courage, but physically he had heretofore been a cipher to her. She had always regarded him as a semi-invalid. His epileptic seizures had much to do with this; also his addiction to a drug which stands for inertia and paralysis of the will. And in all the years she had known him, she had never seen him drive a motor car or a horse, sail a boat, or play an outdoor game of any kind.

She was therefore surprised, not to say gratified, at the ease and skill with which he now controlled the spirited animal before him. Had she been driving, she would have felt her way, but he

plunged into the unknown at a speed of at least ten miles an hour. And because it was he who did it, and not herself, she was not afraid.

"Georgia," said Hume, after a while, "we are off our road. The hills and the hollows don't come right. We must have taken the northern instead of the southern fork of the State road. If so, we ought to strike Hebron soon. It won't make much difference, for there's a good road from Hebron to Wayne City. It's a little longer that way, but we have plenty of time to catch the mail at Wayne."

Georgia had never supposed, as she sat by Hume's side in his limousine, many and many a time in the past, that he had noted anything they passed, much less the "hills and hollows" of which he spoke. But the fact of his having spoken of them added to her sense of security.

Twenty, thirty, forty minutes passed, and still no Hebron. Hume again struck a match, and looked at his watch.

"If we could only find a farmhouse, we could ask just where we are," murmured the girl.

"I'm looking for one. But there are no lights. Farmers, like other honest folk, are all in bed now."

A few minutes later, however, he detected, by a flash of lightning, a bridge across the roadside ditch. Presumably it led to a farmhouse, and, detaching one of the lamps, Hume set off in the darkness. Georgia heard a dog bark, next a vigorous pounding upon a door, and then a voice—a large, open-air voice, accustomed to calling distant hogs and cattle or carrying on a conversation across a forty-acre field.

"Brother, you're a long ways from Wayne City," it said. "Fact is, you're five miles west of Hebron, 'stid of east of it. There ain't no real road, properly speakin', 'tween here and Hebron, either. You'd better put up hyer for the rest of the night. You're more'n welcome."

"Thank you very much," answered Hume, "but I am upon an urgent errand. Could you direct me?"

The ruminative mind at the window above took its time.

"Well, if you go a quarter farther on, turn to your right for another quarter, and then angle for about a mile and a half along the first road you come to, which will be on your right, you'll strike the main road about three miles from Hebron. 'Tain't much of a road for the first two miles, but with your lamps you ought to be able to foller it."

Just how he did it, Georgianna could not have said, but Hume found the angling road—if road it could be called. It was only a pair of ruts through an area of stumps and second growth. The stumps, instead of becoming scarcer, as they expected, grew thicker and thicker, until finally they gave way to a forest. The intelligent horse now refused to move faster than a walk, and finally he stopped.

Hume glanced at his watch. It was half-past twelve o'clock, too late, of course, to catch their train. He said nothing about that, though, but again lifted a lamp from its socket, and explored the ground ahead. Then, turning, he worked back for some distance.

"I can't even find the road we came in by, much less anything ahead," he reported at last. By the light of the lamp his dripping face wore a comical, rather than a distressed, look. "How about you?" he asked, smiling.

"Never happier," she answered gamely.

"We could work back by our wheel tracks," he continued, "but it would hardly do for us to seek lodging at a farmhouse. The story would be over the country in twenty-four hours. I think the best thing we can do now is to wait here for daylight. That will be only three and a half hours now—if it stops raining. We'll then go back home. Meanwhile, I'll unhitch the horse. He'll be more comfortable, and we'll be safer, for if a falling limb should strike him he might become unmanageable."

"Can you unhitch him?" asked his companion doubtfully.

"Pshaw!" He tied up the traces, and unsnapped the breech straps. "I wasn't

a farmer's boy for nothing. I haven't unhitched a horse in many, many years, but it comes to me as naturally now as I fancy diving off a stump in the old swimming hole would."

He led the animal a short distance away, tied it to a stout sapling, and then climbed into the buggy again. Rain had ceased to fall, and, after throwing the boot over the dashboard, and rolling up the back curtain, he lit a cigar. Neither spoke for some time, but listened to the drip-drip from the boughs overheard, and the sound of their horse's teeth against the bark of the sapling. Then Hume said quietly:

"Georgia, I have loved you for a long, long time."

She made no answer, and he seemed in no hurry to continue, and for another interval they listened to the forest preening itself, as it were, after the storm, restoring bent limbs and twigs to their place, and shaking off the weight of water.

"I have loved you for four years," Hume then continued. "During that time, and longer, you have been my right bower. I don't know what I should have done without you. I might have found a man, possibly even another woman, who would have shown the genius you have in handling my affairs. Yet I doubt it. I know I could never have found any one else in whom I could so readily have placed my confidence. I have paid you a large salary, and yet it is not as much as you are worth to me. It is so large that—as I have said before—I cautioned you to keep it from the public, lest it smirch your name. But I know, as you perhaps know, that in spite of this and many other precautions, there has been talk about you. Had you been a plain, spectacled old maid, you might have escaped; but, with your youth and beauty, it was inevitable that the tongue of gossip should wag?"

He stopped again, as if waiting for some comment from her. But she did not speak. She simply sat curled up on the seat like a child, with her eyes half closed.

"You have been more to me than a

mere secretary. You have exercised your personality upon me to my good. You have cheered me up, you have made the clouds look not so black. That is a great thing to do, my girl, for even a single human being. Yet you can do more for me, if you will."

He knocked the ash from his cigar, and turned toward her.

"My home needs a head—a domestic and social head. Virginia does well enough in her way, but some day she'll marry and leave me.

"I am not a young man, Georgia. I speak calmly, perhaps too calmly. But I want a wife who has something of the qualities of a general. And yet, Georgia, I want more. I want a woman whom I can love, and one who can love me. Without love all the rest would be in vain. I tried it once, to my great sorrow. Georgia, will you, can you, meet these conditions, and become my wife?"

From his first words, her heart had been beating with unwonted excitement. During her first year of service under him he, in spite of his much greater age, his limp, his infirmity of temper and body, his uncouthness of manner, had made an impression upon her which no mere Adonis could possibly have made. When he had faced overwhelming odds, in the battles of finance; when, in the arena peculiar to his vocation, he had fought with bulldog tenacity, hazarding, more than once, his whole fortune to carry the day, she had been conscious of a quickened pulse. After a day of battle, when he had returned to his office, irritable and fatigued, a terror to his clerks, she had felt it a privilege to sit across a desk from him.

But marriage! His proposal had come like a bolt from a clear sky. Even his submission on this night regarding the blowing of the dam, she had regarded only as a part of the give-and-take game they had so long played.

"Mr. Hume," she murmured, with a humility new to his ears, "I am far from what you take me to be. But I love you. I have loved you for a long time, as you say you have loved me. But as to marrying you—I am not sure



"They have blown the east wing of the dam, instead of the west!" he cried, in excitement.

that I could serve you in that way. Virginia hates me, and I—I hate her."

"Child's talk—child's talk!" he murmured fondly. He drew her head to his shoulder, and kissed her. "She hates you because you have occupied a false position, in her eyes. Two people as clever as you and she, once placed on a proper footing, will not long hold out against each other."

"Do you believe that I love you, Aaron?" she asked, after a little.

"I do."

"Believe me, in spite of all my follies, I would never marry any man whom I did not love," said she earnestly. "Marriage without love, it seems to me, would be the most detestable, the most unbearable, alliance on earth."

The tail of the storm bent their way, it seemed, for a brief shower began to fall. In the midst of it a clap of thunder echoed weirdly through the wood.

"Are you afraid?" she asked, pressing closer to his side.

"Afraid? I never was cozier in my life."

9

A moment later there came another dull boom, but so unlike its predecessors that neither of them mistook it for thunder.

"What was that?" she exclaimed, starting up.

Hume did not answer immediately.

"I don't know," he said slowly, "but I believe, Georgia—I believe that it was Usher's dynamite cartridge at the dam. We have been traveling in a circle, and must be near home again."

Neither spoke again for some time. The sound, whatever it was, had weighed their spirits down.

"I am sorry for poor Flenner," observed Aaron. "This is too sweet a world for dynamite and all cruel things—too sweet a world for vengeance, and I never knew it to seem as sweet as to-night. If that was a bomb, if Usher has destroyed Flenner's crop, it would please me to be commissioned by you to pay for every cent of the damage."

"I so commission you," she murmured.

It was very dark in the wood. The

horse at a distance of twelve feet was invisible. So the ear took the place of the eye. Presently Georgianna became conscious of a murmuring throughout the wood, like the stirring of poplar leaves in a gentle wind, only softer.

"What is that?" she asked, raising her head.

"I have been listening," answered Hume. "It sounds like a distant waterfall. Do you suppose it possible that we could hear the rush of water through the gap in Hebron dam, at this distance?"

"It's not that," answered Georgianna, with a shiver. "It sounds just as if an army of worms or grasshoppers were marching by."

Her answer seemed to suggest something to Hume, and he stepped down.

"There is an army marching by," he said to her. "An army of molecules of water. We must be in the bed of a creek. The water is about halfway to our hubs."

When he had taken his seat again, she fastened herself to his arm.

"Are you afraid?" she asked, for the second time.

He laughed joyously, almost boisterously.

"Child, I was never happier in my life!"

"But the water!"

"The water will come no higher. It's an unusual storm that has brought it to its present height."

"How do you know that?"

"Because there is only moss underfoot. Were this place overflowed, even as rarely as once a year, there would be sand."

CHAPTER XVII.

The figure which had followed Francis Usher through all his meanderings from the house as far as the highway was Virginia Hume's. She chanced to be sitting in a little balcony which hung, like a swift's nest, beneath the French window of her study. Hearing a door below her close quite gently—it was this very gentleness which attracted her attention—she looked down over the stone rail.

She had not at first, in the darkness, recognized Usher, but the stealthiness of his movements had prompted her to take a second and closer look. She had met Brandon Flenner on the road that afternoon—the number of times they met accidentally on the road was really quite remarkable—and her mind had since been running on him and his prospects. From these she had wandered, along the mind's mysterious pathway, to her hallucination, as she called it, with reference to the dam. This she had effectually dismissed, but at the sight of Usher she had leaped to her feet like a startled doe, run downstairs, and passed out through the same door he had used.

After Usher had disappeared, she stood by the roadside, with a cry of horror on her lips. The impossible, the unthinkable, the monstrous, had happened! That which she had cast from her mind as an evil illusion had become a revolting reality. Usher and Georgianna, when she came upon them in the park, had been planning to blow up Hebron dam.

What was she to do? She thought first of running after Usher, and either frightening or deterring him by force from his crime. She thought of hurrying to her father, and asking him to stay the annihilator's hand—for she could not yet believe that he was a party to the plot. Yet, even though he were innocent, Virginia had no assurance that his secretary, who was not innocent, would not, by one wile or another, delay him, or divert him, or mislead him, until after her hellish revenge had been accomplished.

There were just two courses left. She could arouse the employees at Grey-stone, and reach the dam in time to frighten Usher away, or she could carry the alarming truth to Brandon Flenner. The first course, while effective, would create a world of gossip and speculation, possibly involving her father. The second would be just as effective, and could be carried out quietly.

Virginia was something of an athlete, and she ran every step of the three-

quarters of a mile which intervened between her and Greystone's palatial stable. With her own hands—for no man was on the floor—she saddled Topsy. For a few rods she cantered, so as not to attract attention. Then, stretching herself over the mare's withers, she put the animal into a full run with a sharp stroke of her whip.

Flenner, sitting outside the house, heard the rapid hoofbeats on the road, a quarter of a mile away; and when they turned into his lane, as he knew from the change in the sound, he ran down to the bars to meet the impetuous rider. His first thought was of his wheat. For three days now, or since the grain had ripened sufficiently to burn readily, he had posted mounted men, day and night, to guard against fire from a carelessly dropped match or cigar. So, while awaiting the oncoming rider, he strained his eyes west and north for a glimpse of the dreaded yellow foe.

He recognized Virginia's horse while she was still a hundred yards away. He breathed a little easier to learn that it was not one of his patrol, and yet braced himself for bad news.

"Brandon," she exclaimed, quivering with excitement, "I don't know it to be true, but I think—I believe that they are going to dynamite the Hebron dam to-night!"

"They! Who?" he demanded, almost roughly.

"Your enemy, Georgianna Lighter, and her tool, Francis Usher."

"This is incredible, Virginia," observed Flenner, peering into her face, as if to make sure that she was not delirious.

"It is not!" she cried. "Usher brought a package of explosive of some kind from the city a few days since, and I know that he has gone off alone in the woods to-night, toward the dam. He went stealthily, too, first south, then east, then north, as if to deceive any watcher. I know, for I followed him as far as the road."

"You are sure he was not going fishing? They're biting well at night now."

"No, no!" she cried impatiently. "He

never fishes. He had no rod—only a black bag. He sneaked off like a criminal, I tell you. He wore a little black hat, such as I never saw on him before. And—I can't tell you about it now, but three days ago it was revealed to me that this thing was going to happen."

Flenner stood silent for a space of ten seconds, perhaps, thinking; but to the excited girl it seemed as if he were never again going to move. Then, springing to the rope of the old dinner bell, he sent it somersaulting over and over again. The iron tongue spoke in no uncertain tones.

Mrs. Flenner and a maid, only half dressed, rushed out of the house in alarm. A couple of dozy hired men stuck their heads outside of an upstairs window. But Flenner as yet made no explanation. He was waiting the answer to the bell. And presently there came the thrum of hoofbeats in the dust from the north; then, almost simultaneously, from the west and northwest. In less than three minutes from the first tap of the alarm, three husky young men dashed into the yard.

While one of the young men was saddling Flenner's horse, the master of Meadowrue rushed into the house. When he came out again he carried a pair of revolvers, one of which he pocketed. The other he handed to a youth whom he called Hank.

As he stood in the light of the torch, Virginia surreptitiously, from her place in the background, studied his face. The impending catastrophe had stricken him with no craven fears. Instead, his eyes flashed, he strode about as if on springs, and altogether looked like a strong man girding himself for a race.

"Now, boys, the secret of all this is short," he said, in his nervous, incisive way. "I have reason to suspect that an enemy of mine is at this moment getting ready to dynamite Hebron dam. It may be a false alarm. If so, not a word of what has occurred here to-night must leak out. We'd be the laughingstock of the community, for one thing. For another, we'd—well, more of that later. Bob!" He called up to one of the windows. "You'd better dress, and see that

Miss Hume gets home safely. Then come back and patrol the fields along the main road. Sylvester, you dress, too, and hang around the house here."

"I'm not going back home," spoke up Virginia. "I'm going with you to the dam."

Flenner eyed her doubtfully; one of the men snickered, which seemed to decide him.

"Very well. It's going to rain, I'm afraid, but I guess you'd be happier at the front. Mary, run in and get her my raincoat and hat—quick."

The party rode hard, and dismounted some three hundred yards from the dam.

"Now, boys," said Flenner softly, to the little circle gathered around him, "there's no need for secrecy, except to catch the scoundrel, and thus render him harmless in the future. How many of you have guns?"

Two answered in the affirmative.

"Be careful how you use them. Don't shoot unless you are shot at. You might kill an innocent man. A good many boys spear suckers from this dam. The apron is dry, so you can walk out safely. Hank, you go as far as the point—nothing is likely to happen beyond there, and if it does it won't hurt us. You go to the middle, Jim, and you, Joe, stay at this end. That will leave me free to do a little scouting. If you see anything suspicious, pass the word along, unless you think it better to stick where you are."

When it began to rain, Flenner led Virginia, somewhat against her will, to an abandoned cow shed a few rods away. He tarried a few minutes to talk with her, and she related all that she knew.

"It looks suspicious," he commented. After a pause, he asked: "Virginia, have you any idea that your father is a party to this?"

"I can't believe it, Brand," she answered. "Father is a stern man, willful, and not quick to forgive. But I can't believe that he would do a hateful thing like this. If he did it would be because——"

She hesitated, and did not finish the

sentence, and Brand, excusing himself, walked down to the end of the dam.

By reason of their riding instead of walking, the party had, in spite of their late start, reached the scene before Usher. Therefore, when he paused in the bushes, Flenner's sentinels were already at their posts. His tread on the damp soil was noiseless, and none of the men heard him approach. But Hank Cary, sitting on the V, glimpsed the beam from the dark lantern, tiny as it was. Hastily pulling off his shoes, so as to make no noise on the boards of the apron, he swiftly ran the length of the wing, communicating his intelligence to the others, including Flenner.

It was this alarm, and probably this alone, which held the crew in their place hour after hour, in spite of the tempest and sluicing rain.

But about half-past one, Flenner, on one of his visits to the cow shed, said: "I am going to take you home now, Virginia. I don't like this keeping you out so late, in a storm."

"I'm perfectly dry," she answered. "And if I were home I could not sleep."

"You need have no further anxiety. With three men on watch, nothing can possibly happen. Besides, no one at your home knows where you are, and you may be missed."

"Who is there at Greystone to miss me?" she asked, with a pensive smile. "No one there will know whether I am home or not at home."

Flenner impulsively bent a little nearer her, but did not speak the words on his lips. He said, instead:

"You must go, anyway. I'm going home myself. These boys can be trusted."

He helped her on her horse, tucked the raincoat carefully about her, and then slipped the reins into the one hand that remained exposed. For just a second or two he let his own hand rest on hers, and then swung himself to the back of his own horse.

They crossed the boggy land which marked the old channel of the Pecos, climbed the ridge, and, in order to shorten the distance by a mile, took an old wood road, which led down the

other side of the ridge, into the old bed of the eastern branch of the river. The fifty-year-old wood here was known as Dutcher's Neck. They had made their way along half of the Neck when the sound of a muffled explosion made them suddenly draw rein.

"The dam!" they exclaimed simultaneously.

Flenner sat in his saddle as if paralyzed, and then covered his face with his hands.

"Be brave, Brand!" murmured Virginia.

"I am not thinking of my wheat—I am thinking of my men. They can hardly escape. The cartridge must have been already placed when we arrived."

"Then let us try to save them!" she cried, wheeling her horse about.

A murmuring sound, like gentle rain on the leafy roof of the forest, suddenly startled them. It was the same sound which had startled Georgianna Lighter, and presently the pair noticed that their horses' hoofs were splashing in water.

"Where are we?" exclaimed Flenner.

At the same instant his horse swung round, and emitted a shrill neigh.

The murmur rose in volume, rose until it became a roar, and, bending over his stirrup, Flenner touched water. For an instant he faltered.

"They have blown the east wing of the dam, instead of the west!" he cried, in excitement. "We shall have to fight for our lives!"

The next few minutes remained a blur in Flenner's memory. The pent-up waters, quickly widening the gap made by the dynamite, swept down upon them in an angry, ravening flood. The panic-stricken horses, forgetting reins and their masters' voices, wildly reared and plunged, bracing themselves against the flood, but swept swiftly onward by its irresistible power. Flenner clung blindly to the bit strap of Virginia's animal, scratched, and beaten, and almost dismounted by low-hanging branches, and caroming from bole to bole with stunning violence. Then finally came a terrific shock, and for an instant the turmoil ceased.

"It's the old mill," said Virginia, speaking for the first time, and giving Flenner his first assurance that she was still on her horse and alive.

Her calm voice restored her companion's equilibrium, and from a mere fighting, struggling, desperate animal, much like the horse beneath him, he became a reasoning man again. Slipping from his mount, into water not quite shoulder deep, he seized the girl, and made his way toward the dark aperture which marked the door of the ancient stone structure. He crossed the ground floor, still in three feet of water, groped about in the gloom for the familiar stairway, and ascended to safety above.

From outside there came an unearthly scream—a sound which Flenner had heard only once in his life before, when three of his father's horses were cremated in a burning stable. For a few seconds there were frantic hoofbeats against the wall, and then the poor brutes, bereft of their masters, were swept away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Are you cold?" asked Brandon.

Virginia shook her head.

A gray, leaden, weeping dawn was creeping into the room in which they sat, giving faint visibility to the huge uprights and crossbeams. During the two hours they had spent here the two had talked little. They had plenty of food for thought. How came the east wing to be blown, instead of the west? Or had both wings been blown, through ignorance, in order to insure success. Were Hank, and Joe, and Jim alive or dead? And the wheat—was it still standing, or was it a sodden ruin?

"Have you taken cold?" he presently asked.

"No. I'm only wet—and tired."

She smiled, but her face was almost as wan as the dawn.

"Virginia," he observed, in an altered tone, "this is a grave hour. Yet love is also grave, and I deem it no less fitting an hour, on account of its gravity, for me to speak again of my love for you. I have been silent for a long time. But I feel this morning that you are

mine in a sense that you were not mine yesterday. Nature, in her own terrific way, which takes no account of ours, has baptized our union. So, at least, my heart interprets it. Does yours respond?"

"Oh, Brand," she murmured, with misty eyes, "my heart has always responded to yours. It is my head that bars my way."

"A head is a poor thing compared with a heart. Be my wife," he pleaded. "Put me off no longer. Expediency is a false prophethess. She will never say yes to our marriage."

He took her hand—without resistance.

"Brand, you're a man, and I'm a woman."

"Yes."

"Perhaps in this matter your wisdom is greater than mine. Perhaps I have been timid. You would not ask me to be false to a trust—to leave father as long as there were any chance of my helping him?"

"No."

"You wouldn't ask me just because you wanted me very, very much?"

"No."

"Then—then your way is my way."

He did not kiss her—only drew her to his side.

There was soon light enough for them to see that the reservoir had exhausted itself. Its anger, so quick to flame up, had quickly burned to ashes. The water in the Neck had run out, leaving only occasional pools, bent bushes, muddy tree trunks, and patches of raw soil.

The walking was heavy, however; at every step the pair sank ankle deep into the saturated ground, and their progress was slow. Presently Flenner discovered a horse tied to a sapling; but the horse lay on the ground, and was dead. A few rods farther on they found a buggy, tightly wedged between two trees.

"This spells tragedy, I fear," said Brandon soberly.

It came soon—perhaps forty rods farther down. They were both peering anxiously ahead, but Flenner saw it

first. He bade Virginia tarry behind, but she reached the spot almost as soon as he.

They looked for a long time, as if with greedy eyes. But they were eyes transixed with horror. Then Virginia turned away, covered her face with her hands, and emitted a low, shivering wail.

Upon the sodden ground, locked arm in arm, breast to breast, lay Aaron Hume and Georgianna. Upon their faces was no hint of struggle, or suffering, or despair. They had met death as they had met life—without fear. Nor on Aaron's face was there any trace of the passion which had so often set his mouth awry. Fate had willed that he should die by waters let forth, with his knowledge and consent, for the destruction of an enemy. Yet death had surprised him with no lines of resentment upon his countenance.

Flenner looked up at the sound of steps. He recognized Adkins, head coachman at Greystone. Slipping the raincoat from Virginia, he gently covered the dead.

"Go home, my dear," he whispered to Virginia. "You go home with her, Adkins, and then send up a suitable conveyance for these two dead. I'll watch till it comes."

After the wagon had come and gone with its pitiable burden, Flenner struck out for home. As he neared the top of the hill which hid Meadowrue from his view, his heart quickened. What was he to see? When all but at the top, he shut his eyes, and took three long strides. Then he opened his eyes.

His Wheat, his beautiful Wheat, with its millions of golden heads studded with millions of pearls from the rain, sparkled and danced under the first rosy rays of the morning sun.

He knew that his men were safe. What he did not know, and was never to know, was that Francis Usher, maddened by jealousy, and the thought that he had been betrayed and abandoned by the woman he loved, had wreaked his maniacal rage upon Aaron Hume by blowing the east wing of the dam. He had done his work well—too well.

MANNA

—BY—

MARTHA
McCULLOCH
WILLIAMS



ILLUSTRATED BY L. F. A. LORENZ

THE trolley ran past three really handsome churches, all stained glass and Gothic traceries, to end at a hotel which looked as though it had never been new and fresh. By the contrast, Temple judged Arkwith town. Slow, dead slow! It must be, in spite of obvious prosperity. There were good shops, already filled with custom, at nine o'clock in the morning. Moreover, the folk passing leisurely up and down had an air of ease and substantial content.

Temple felt like swearing at them; he was in a black ill humor. It did not in the least mend his temper that he had to go a little around, when he came to the hotel entrance. Space in front of the piazza steps had been preëmpted by a shining new buggy, to which a span of chestnuts, bloodlike and well-conditioned; was attached by brand-new silver-mounted harness. As he strode toward the open door, two people came through it. He stopped short at sight of them, stared hard at the woman, then said, lifting his hat, he hardly knew why:

"Going out, Av—Mrs. Mawne, I mean? Can't you wait a little while? I've come to see you—on special business."

"Then you can wait," the woman, Avice Mawne, late leading lady of the "Splendid Sinner" Company, said air-

ily, barely turning her eyes upon Temple. "Can't possibly stop now," she went on. "We're late—my fault—I kept Billy waiting half an hour. I think I know the business—it isn't so urgent. Anyway, I can't consider it, until I come back."

"When will that be?" Temple asked, frowning blackly.

Avice laughed softly.

"Maybe to-morrow—or next day—or never," she said, running down the steps.

Billy Marchmont was sure she had the lightest foot in the world, and almost the smallest, notwithstanding she was tall, with a figure graciously curved. Supple, also, and of a dark, brilliant, alluring beauty, with dimples playing hide and seek in damask-rose cheeks, and red lips falling easily to elfin smiles. She had bewitched him, not as she had bewitched Temple, through her beauty conjoined to a tantalizing distantness. It was rather something spiritual, beginning perhaps in pity, rising up through the inflamings of heady youth and April weather to the heights of manly passion.

Long, lean, limber, with thick flaxen hair, eyes of flax-flower blue, and the frankest smile in the world, he had won upon Avice at the first glance. She had said to herself: "He can be trusted, even though he is a man."

V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1

XUM



"Then you can wait," the woman said airily, barely turning her eyes upon Temple.

She was chary of trust in men, especially Temple's sort. He was big, bold, black-browed, with cruel, compelling gray eyes under the black thatches. Essentially a gambler, quick and daring, he had been more than once potentially a millionaire, only to lose at the next turn of the game. The game of the Street, understand—he held the green cloth, the speckled ivory cubes, mere diversions for idle time. He wanted Avice rather badly, between pique and passion. Now, for three years, he had proposed to her periodically.

slightly unctuous wit. Even Temple softened to him. This in late afternoon—Temple had spent the morning tramping grimly about town, sneering at its sloth, and cursing himself for his own folly in coming to it. He had come on impulse, after learning the company's misadventure.

He might have known better—that adversity hardened Avice. But he was going West, anyhow; he had not been able to keep himself from choosing the route that led through Arkwith.

"Pity, sho'ly a pity, about Mrs. Mawne and the company." Thus Land-

In the beginning of it, he had not so greatly cared; she held him captive by the charm of being unattainable. Yet there had been times when he had been nearer success than he knew—when she was wearied of the stage and all its works. Five seasons through she had hung upon the very skirts of opportunity—the opportunity for a great success, which had yet persistently eluded her.

She had liked taking big chances, thus there was in her an element which answered to the gambler in Temple. All the savings of thrifty years had been risked in the stranded company. After she had paid everything, she had decided to rest a fortnight in Arkwith. It lay southerly, spring was toward, and living cheap. Besides, the inhabitants had interested her. The landlord, abundant in leisure, was as good as a town chronicle. He was also much flattered by her staying, and told her at least twice a day that never since the Polk House opened its doors had it sheltered a guest who did it more honor.

A round, twinkling, pursy man, oozing good humor, and

lord Hite upon the piazza in afternoon sunshine. "Mighty fine lady Mrs. Mawne—mighty fine actress, too. Arkwith never saw a better. But things happened contrairy. If only the company had come a week earlier, or the circus and the revival a little later, the house'd 'a' been packed. For three nights, at that. Arkwith knows acting when it sees, and hears of it. But with half the town just newly converted over, and all the country folks having blown themselves to the circus, both performances, there wasn't really enough left to half fill the hall. Game! Mrs. Mawne had been dead game. Played her time through—the whole three nights, if there was only nineteen people the last of 'em. Saturday night it was—she had come out at the end, and thanked what audience she had. Said she'd never try again to play any town of the Arkwith kind, nights when folks were mostly taking baths. She hoped nobody would suffer from coming to hear her. Cleanliness was next to Godliness—even ahead of it sometimes."

Temple began to chuckle there. He could fancy the twinkle in Avice's eyes, the sly smile hovering about her lips.

"Billy Marchmont had been there every night. He'd been staying in town, 'tending to law business for his grandpaw, the old captain. Yes, that was Billy Mrs. Mawne had gone away with. The boy sho'ly had it—had it bad."

Landlord Hite was just a little curious how it would work out—Billy's taking a play actress to see his folks.

Fine people the Marchmonts—real quality white folks. Used to be big—rich—all they had left now was the land. And there was trouble threatening over that. At least, folks said so. Hite hoped they were wrong. Old Cap'n Marchmont had but one arm, the left. Billy was the only boy, but he had three sisters, the two oldest pretty well past the marrying time. It would be hard, mighty hard, on all of 'em, to have anything happen to Billy—or the place.

"A good place, land so rich, the Marchmonts ought to lay up money

every year. Instead, they spend or give away so much, they are hardly ever more than a hundred dollars ahead of their debts. Not extravagant—just fool-liberal, like times hadn't changed for them, same as everybody else. Billy tips right and left, whenever he comes to town—and up at the courthouse, Squire Greene said one First Monday: 'What use has the county got for a poorhouse? The Marchmonts are still at Greenbank.' A joke, of course—the squire is great at joking—but it comes near the truth. Maybe, Mrs. Mawne might change that, if she could make up her mind to settle there. Yes, she'd have the chance, all right, all right. Billy made no bones of letting folks understand she would."

At that, Temple got up, and strolled down to the river. It ran turbid, and bank full, the slowly rising waters lapping over into hollows and gulleys making in from the town face. It was a hilly face, all the commons set thick with native bluegrass, the short turf cropped by ragged cattle, just losing winter coats. Temple snorted at sight of them. A cow pasture that called itself a town had no business to be on the route of traveling companies. Next minute he laughed. It was maybe to the cows, no less the revival and the circus, he owed his opportunity. It was opportunity—he had an inner sense that he had not come to the end of it, notwithstanding the way Avice had looked at him.

Still—he slept badly, and awoke more than ever ill-humored. He was resolved not to wait—to be prompt for the morning train. She would hardly get back before train time; perhaps he might leave a note for her. Breakfast had no savor for him, though he had to admit it was abundant and good. After it he sat down in the state parlor, which had a worn Turkey carpet, huge mirrors in tarnished frames, and a full set of hair-cloth and mahogany. Depressing enough, yet it suited his humor.

He had just dipped his pen in the rococo inkwell when two hands fell upon his shoulders, and Avice said breathlessly:

V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1
XUM

"You needn't write. I'm here."

"So! Frost fell on love's young dream, I suppose," Temple said, not turning his head, suddenly savage in a sense of outrage.

Avice stood silent, her breath coming quickly.

He went on, drawing circles with the pen:

"You must have been snubbed—hard

—to send you back so early. Tell me all about it, before I go."

"I had better wait—there is hardly time to be married before the train leaves," Avice said steadily.

Temple sprang up, with a smothered oath.

"What has happened?" he demanded roughly.

Avice freed herself, and faced him, saying:

"I might make you sorry for that—only I need you. You need me just the same."

"What has happened?" he repeated obstinately.

She shook herself impatiently, a far-away look in her eyes.

"You will never understand," she said. "But listen! You saw me go—Greenbank is fifteen miles from town, and half a mile from heaven. The people there didn't snub me; instead, they treated me like a stray princess. Billy loved me—and Billy is the king, who can do no wrong. You ought to see the place—a wide, low gray house, with tall chimneys, and apple trees in full

bloom all around. All the girls came to meet me—in clean, starched calico frocks, and black silk aprons. And there was the old captain, out feeding the pigeons—flocks of them, a whole skyful. They were his wife's; not one has been killed since she died ten years back. He let me feed them—not many folks do that. The pretty pirates literally covered my arms and shoulders.

Billy had to rescue me. He did it adorably, as he does all sorts of things."

"Cut him out or I won't listen," Temple said sullenly.

Avice looked at him, smiling oddly.

"I forgot you couldn't understand him—no more than he could understand you," she said. "We went inside, after I had been smothered in spice pinks and sweet betsyies. I had not seen them since granny died, and they nearly made me cry. You never saw such a place—big, clean, spare square rooms, not cluttered anywhere

—just a few beautiful old things—enough for comfort. Portraits painted back in the forties and fifties—old daguerreotypes, too—the captain and his wife, although they have portraits, their little girls who all died, and Billy's father, who lived to grow up and marry the little curly-headed cousin, taken with him. Nothing seemed newer than the Civil War. Such patchwork quilts, and homespun counterpanes, and netted



"The pretty pirates literally covered my arms and shoulders."

curtains at the company bedroom windows! Steps for helping yourself into the high four-poster. Oh, it was heavenly—but nothing compared to the people.

"They looked at me with such eyes. Not staring—rather like children who were seeing a real fairy. At table they ate hardly at all—they were so intent on me, giving me the best of everything, yet with no officiousness. There were servants—black and smiling. Greenbank seems to smile all over. It—it—took my breath. The longer I stayed there, the more I choked. You see, I knew I could live there always. And I knew I couldn't live up to it. And that would mean heartbreak to all of us. Not that I'm a wicked woman, as women are reckoned. No man can say I have not kept straight, or played fair.

"The Marchmonts didn't dream it, but they put my soul on the rack. I am not ashamed to tell you the truth. Billy attracted me—strongly. If he had had people who flouted or merely tolerated me, I should be ready to marry him next week. After the old captain prayed for me at family worship, I—I knew I could never do it. It would be sacrilege. Don't laugh! I never pretended to be religious, but deep down, there is something—something that makes me know!

"I had the softest, whitest bed, smelling of lavender and dried rose leaves, but I could not sleep—the prayer haunted me so. There was a moon that made all the room inside pearly-gray. I felt smudgy, and shopworn, and all out of place in it. Didn't fit in, and knew I never could. In a little while I should tire of it all—the peace, the green fields, the people so like angels, and run away back to my own world. Better break Billy's heart, while it was new enough to mend itself, than ruin his life. I got up at daylight, slipped downstairs, and had it out with him. I didn't tell him the whole truth—that would make him think of me as a heroine and a martyr. I want him to think other things—so he can forget me."

"What did you tell him?" Temple asked, the suspicion of a sneer still in his accent.

Avice laughed, a hard, small laugh. "Oh, nothing very startling," she said. "In fact, you came in mighty handy. I asked Billy: 'Remember the dark man who spoke as we came out?' When he stared at me, I ran on: 'You must take me back at once! I am going to marry him.'"

"How did he take it?" Temple asked, rising as he spoke.

Avice drew back a pace.

"As a gentleman takes such things," she said, her mouth hardening. All at once she burst out: "Let things end here—about him, I mean. You must promise me never to name him again—to question me, or anything, or I shall go back to town and stick to my career."

"No! I can offer you a better one," Temple said, making no move to touch her. "We are going where questions are not asked about anything. Let's pull together, and make our fortune."

When Aspenridge evolved from a wild mining camp into something of ordered decency and approach to society, the rulers, the moving spirits in it, were the Temples, who had been almost the first comers, and were consequently rather richer than any of the rest.

Temple graced his prosperity none so ill; it had bred in him a certain bluff surface kindliness. Yet, his wife was known to be the power behind the throne, though she respected herself too much not to show him a punctilious deference. They were partners and comrades; he talked things over with her before venturing anything considerable. She saw farther and clearer than he, yet had the wit and the art to keep him from knowing it; indeed, to make him believe she was but following his leads. Thus they got on admirably, except for outbreaks on Temple's part. The occasion of them was simple yet singular—nothing more than the half-yearly letters his wife received from Landlord Hite.

Temple would have died rather than acknowledge it, but he had still a consuming jealousy of Billy Marchmont. Even the twins had not cured him of it, though the two sturdy small lads were dearer than life to him.

He had said to Avice once as she sat with them in her arms:

"You look at them as though their name was Marchmont."

She had smiled dreamily, saying nothing for a long time, then suddenly rousing, and flinging at him:

"You ought not to hate the Marchmonts—except for having known them I should not feel that I could ever deserve my babies."

When he had gone away in a black rage afterward she had only sighed. He was her fitter mate, yet by the cleansing and quickening of motherhood she knew that in putting away Billy's love she had put away the finest thing in the world.

Five years after, she said to Temple, looking up from the closely written sheets in her hand:

"You can be easy in your mind now—Billy is dead. Died trying to save two poor black fellows from the river."

"No doubt he was foolhardy," Temple commented—but without his usual sneer. He saw Avice's hands shake—she was reading on and on. "Marchmont left a family?" he ventured interrogatively.

Avice bowed her head, and said diffidently:

"A wife and a baby girl, besides the sisters. None of them has married. The captain died the year after I—saw him."

The earth is as heartless as the seasons. Greenbank laughed out into greenery and apple blowth, answering thus the wooing April sunshine, just as though the captain still fed the pigeons, as though Billy planned the plowing and the planting, especially as though the sheriff were not coming to turn the women out of it, in behalf of new owners.

The long fight was lost. After ten years of alternate hope and anxiety, the

court of last resort had decided against the Marchmonts. Their title was fatally flawed. In the effort to defend it Billy had stripped himself bare, mortgaging stock and crops, even the very house plenishings, for money to pay lawyers. He had told his womenkind all about it. They had not minded greatly.

"You'll take care of us, no matter what happens," Lethe, the eldest, had said, stroking his hair, as he sat with Baby Avice upon his knee.

He had smiled at her—it was all the answer he could trust himself to make her. The next day he was brought home, dead.

That was just after New Year—the case had been ended in March. When the bad news came, Peggy, the youngest sister, said brokenly:

"Thank the Lord Billy is gone."

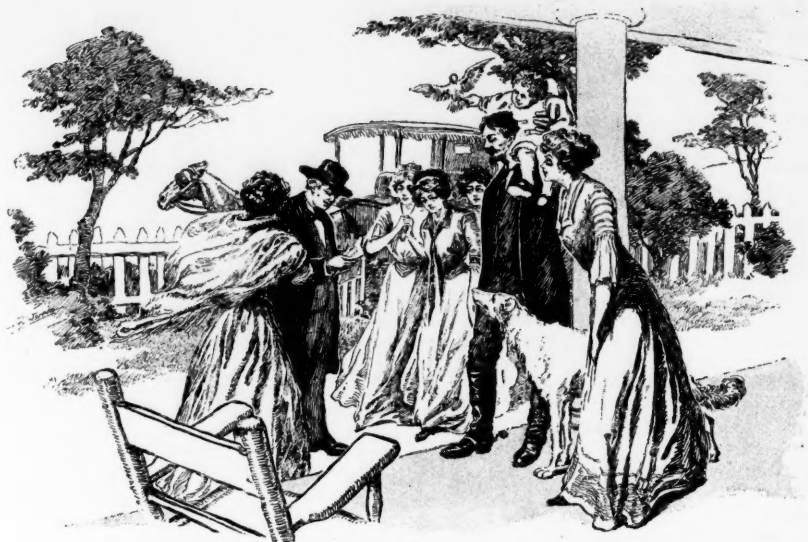
She had spoken what Lethe and Mary were thinking. Only Nell, his widow, cried out in protest.

The shock of a great heartbreak brings a certain peace. Nell marred the peace of the Marchmonts—she was full of grievance against Billy, against all of them. If they had not been so thriftless, so shiftless, so extravagant, all these years, there might have been money for a compromise. Why, in the beginning the thing could have been settled for ten thousand dollars. It could be settled still—the adverse attorneys had written to her, Billy's widow. But where was the money to come from? She could take her child and go back to her brother; but his house was small, and he had seven children of his own.

Thus she girded at the stricken women, sitting supine herself, while they went about, making ready their small belongings for the inevitable.

"We won't go to the poorhouse—not just yet," Peggy had said. "There's a cabin over on the Lane place we can rent for twenty dollars a year. We'll go live there—it has two pens—and try to raise chickens enough to pay the rent."

Peggy was so like Billy, the others let her lead. They had still two days



"We will not try to thank her. She knows," Peggy added

of grace, yet were, after a sort, impatient of them. They would not draw an easy breath until everything was over, yet felt bound to stay until the new owner's representative and the mortgagee came to take possession.

They were glad Landlord Hite held the mortgage. He would use their cherished possessions reverently, selling the stock, of course, and the things perishable, but keeping for himself the silver, the old mahogany, and the Wedgewood ware, of which they had been so proud. A kind man—he had insisted upon giving Baby Avie's cradle that had rocked four generations of Marchmonts. Nell was planning to sell it for the price of a proper mourning veil, but had kept the plan to herself. She was slight and trim, of a peachy, almond-eyed beauty; even in the earliest transports of grief she had never once forgotten to curl her hair. Peggy was so glad the child had no look of her. Neither was it much like Billy, throwing back, with curious fidelity, to his grandmother instead—a famous beauty of her time.

Nell sat upon the stone steps, wiping her eyes. The child had quitted her to toddle after early butterflies which hovered over the pinks. Her mother did not watch her—instead, her eyes ranged the big road. What she saw there made her rise, and call hushedly:

"Peggy! Miss Lethe! You must have miscounted the time. Yonder's the sheriff—and the Hite buggy right behind him."

"I reckon they thought we might need them to help us," Lethe said, the least flush mounting in her thin cheeks.

Mary, who was as round as Lethe was thin, nodded energetically.

"Joe Peters told me he never would a-run for sheriff, if he had thought it would come to taking away our home," she said. "'Never you mind, Joe,' I said. 'It's one of the chances. You might have to hang somebody.' 'I'd a heap rather do it—if they deserved hanging,' Joe said back. He meant it, too—we—we—Lethe—we mustn't—cry—before him."

"No! For Billy's sake!" Peggy amended. She was very white, and

still-faced. Commonly she had the look of dancing water.

Nell turned passionately upon her.

"Billy! Billy! Always Billy! You make me sick!" she cried. "You know he's out of it all—but you never say a word about me! And I've got that child!"

"Give her to me," Peggy said, hardly above a whisper, her eyes devouring the little, rumped figure which trotted back to them, crowing triumph over the fringy pinks clutched tight in both hands.

Nell made to snatch her up, but she ran past her, into Peggy's enticing arms. And Peggy, holding her tight, resolved never to let her go.

"Why! There's Mrs. Hite, too!" Nell ejaculated, scanning the group at the stile.

Lethe walked toward it, stepping very precisely, so as to be sure she stepped at all. Mrs. Hite came to her running, and breathless.

"Honey! honey! I'm so glad!" she panted. "I wanted to fly when the good news came—and it seemed to me we crawled all the way."

She had Lethe in her arms, hugging her tight. Joe Peters shook Mary's hands over and over—speech was beyond him. They had been schoolchildren together; besides, he owed the Marchmonts kindness untold.

Landlord Hite slapped him on the back, saying, with suspicious lightness:

"Lordy, Joe! After this, you'll know how it feels to get a reprieve."

"I sho'ly will," Joe answered, patting Mary's plump shoulder. "I wish Louisa was here," he added. "She would be, certain—if I had known in time."

"Known what?" Nell demanded. "Are you-all crazy? If there is anything but more trouble, for Heaven's sake say so!"

"Read the letter out loud, Silas—that tells everything better than we can," Mrs. Hite commanded.

She had made her way to Peggy, and coaxed the baby from her arms—more than one big tear plashed amid the tangled curls, as Landlord Hite read, with slow solemnity:

Go straight to the Marchmonts in their trouble. Tell them because they gave me kindness that was like manna in the wilderness, now they must take something from me. Before you get this my lawyers will have paid everything except your claim—I know you will wait a week for that. Henceforth everything is to belong inalienably equally to Billy's three sisters. I leave to them the delight of providing for his child and my namesake.

Because she is my namesake I already love her; because she is a Marchmont I pray she may be a credit to her blood. Humbly, on the knees of my soul as it were, I ask those other Marchmonts to let me make this thank offering. They showed me, for the first time, the beauty, the joy of perfect kindness. Thereby they made me know I had, after all, a woman's heart—and that a woman's destiny could be worth while.

If that does not satisfy them, say—Billy loved me. They know it already. What they do not know is—there is something in me worthy his love.

Landlord Hite stopped, he could read no farther. All the women were crying—even Nell. The sobbing was undervoiced by the humming of many bees, the flittering of impatient pigeons overhead. Joe Peters stood uncovered, his dim eyes cast down. The big blue hound, Billy's special field comrade, slipped a confident nose in his hand.

The child motioned imperatively to be set down. She ran to the side of the dog, and held up her arms to Peters.

"Take baby!" she entreated gravely. "Baby ain't dot no daddy now!"

He swung her to his shoulder. She stretched out her arms. The boldest of the pigeons perched on it; a cloud of the others settled on the grass.

"It is nine years, to a day, since Avice fed them," Peggy said, turning to fetch the basket of grain.

Lethe detained her.

"Avice! She talks of manna!" she said. "We did nothing—how could we help but be nice to her? But she—she is saving us from worse than hunger, giving back so much for so little."

"We will not try to thank her. She knows," Peggy added.

Mary smiled, and wiped her eyes. Mrs. Hite beamed, saying, as she raised her clasped hands:

"Surely she knows. The beauty of manna is—it does more for them that give it than them that receive."



A DEAL IN "THRILL- F-LIFE" By Holman F. Day.



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

CAP'N AARON SPROUL, once of the deep sea, and of late the high sheriff of his county, now happily retired from all manner of hateful public service, rang daily changes upon a single theme.

That theme concerned the contentment of a sailor who can turn his back on the sea and raise his own "garden sass."

"That's what I come ashore for," he informed his admiring wife, "that, and to find a woman like you, Louada Murrilla. And, as near as I can remember, before I got my first cowcubers to blossom in, they come around here and rammed me into office, and I've been skipper or first pilot aboard some kind of a public job ever since—not daring to leave the wheel in beackets long enough to drill in a row of beet seed. Makes me wonder what I was thinking of when I look back on it—me that has hankered for fresh vegetables of my own raise whilst I've sailed every sea that a fish ever swallowed water in. No, sir, I don't know what I've been thinkin' of! But let 'em come 'round and try it on me again—that's all I've got to say!"

During a bland summer the cap'n's contentment grew as grew his garden truck; in the early autumn his comfort in things as they were became as mel-

low as the luscious "sass" he culled from stalk and vine for his table.

In his new pursuit he even treated his neighbor, Hiram Look, retired showman, rather cavalierly. He would not loaf and yarn on the piazza with his old friend. Hiram had to hunt him up in the garden, where he was mulling and grubbing between the rows of growing things, grunting monosyllables to Hiram's remarks on matters of public interest. Once or twice Hiram ventured to hint that the cap'n might get his fingers into affairs of wider moment than a truck garden; for instance, if he would only say the word—yes, simply turn his hand over, he might be—

"Look-a-here, Hiram," broke in Cap'n Sproul, glaring through a tangle of pole beans like a tiger through the bars of its cage, "there was a feller along here the other day who said something to me about takin' the nomination for the legislature from this town—but he was on t'other side of the fence, and happened to be a good runner. So he got away. If you want me to say any more than that in the way of hints, I can do so, but it will be a kind of breezy language which will carry away more or less top-hamper from a long-standin' friendship."

"Nevertheless, I'm goin' to inform

V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1

XUM

you that there's something the matter with an intelligent man who quits active life, and squats down to raisin' fodder to stuff into his stomach, doin' nothing else from one day's end to another."

"If you think there's anything the matter with me, you'd better keep it to yourself, and avoid general wear and tear of riffin'," returned the cap'n curtly.

At Boadway's store that evening, Hiram Look informed certain interested members of the town's political ring that they'd better seek farther for a candidate.

"His mind and attention are what you might call taken up," said the old showman. "As near as I could tell from a cursory observation, he's desperately in love with a rooty-bagy turnip after havin' finished a flirtation with a mangel-wurtzel beet. And he's teaching a crew of cabbages how to tack ship, and has got his pole beans so that they can furl sails. Yes, gents, take your lasso and climb the fence into another pasture."

"Won't you reconsider and take the nomination yourself, Mr. Look?" asked Constable Nute.

"No, sir!" stated Hiram firmly. "I've got other business comin' on that's goin' to take all my time and attention. It ain't garden sassin', though!"

"We reckon we can scale about a hundred dollars off'n that sum we mentioned to you for a campaign contribution," went on Nute hungrily and wistfully. "The boys had got it figgered a little high."

"It ain't a case of money with me," said Hiram stiffly. "When I want an office, I'll go after it, and blast the expense! After bein' foreman of your Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association as long as I have, I don't think you ought to twit me about bein' narrer in money matters."

"Twittin' was farthest from my mind," Nute hastened to assure him, to the chorus of protests from others eager to placate their "good thing."

"When I say I've got other business," stated Hiram, "I mean other business."

After he had stalked out of the store, Scotaze's politicians mournfully canvassed the situation and agreed finally with Lycurgus Snell, who suggested that Hiram's business probably had to do with a certain "pink-vested chap" who was stopping at Hiram's house, and with whom he had been buttoned up much for a week or so. But as to what that business might be, no one seemed to be able to advance an opinion.

Cap'n Sproul, sitting in rapt contemplation of the possibilities of his garden patch, had seen this stranger pass in the highway with Hiram on several occasions. He had not paid especial attention to the stranger except to note that he was flashily dressed and smoked cigarettes. On noting the latter fact, the cap'n had dismissed the individual from his mind as one who was not worth consideration by a sensible man. So he was neither pleased nor impressed when Hiram turned in at the gate one day with the stranger in tow.

"Havin' caught you out of that garden for once, sittin' on your piazza where you can't be taken up every minute throwin' kisses to squashes, and dandlin' punkins on your knee, I've called with a friend," said Hiram sarcastically. "Cap'n Sproul, shake hands with Mr. Speed—Barnum Speed, of New York. Named for the great P. T., and deservin' the name."

The cap'n shook hands grudgingly, without rising.

"My friend Look tells me you can give us all cards and spades in raising things," volunteered Mr. Speed breezily, lighting a fresh cigarette.

"Meanin' garden sass prob'ly," said the cap'n. "I ain't competin' with you New Yorkers in raisin' one thing."

"Ah, and what is that?"

"Tophet," returned Cap'n Sproul sourly. "You can raise that in one night in New York without mulchin' the roots."

Mr. Speed laughed without resentment, and slapped the cap'n on the shoulder with the suggestion that he "was a fine old joker."

At this juncture, Hiram broke in,

having a thorough understanding of Cap'n Sproul's general attitude toward men who smoked cigarettes and were too forward on short acquaintance.

"I've come here to talk business, Aaron, and I've brought my friend Speed along because he belongs in the business. You know I've been at you now for two years or more to do something with that upcountry timber tract we own on equal partnership."

"I'm satisfied with it as it is," said the cap'n, glowering upon Speed as though he wondered how that fresh gentleman could belong in any business of his. "The timber is growin' right along at a rate, so the feller that cruised it says, that's payin' us ten per cent interest against the time we get ready to cut. And as for me, I ain't ready to cut. I like to see things grow, whether it's trees or garden sass."

"You and me agrees," stated Hiram affably. "Let it grow. I ain't suggestin' cuttin'. But as business men, let's be gettin' something out of it while the trees are growin'. I like to keep the nimble dollar rollin'."

"My dollar is rollin' fast enough to suit me," insisted the cap'n. "I ain't usin' up my interest money. And from now on I'm goin' to take it easy. Don't come around here draggin' me into any more fuss and fury. You ain't spendin' your own interest money. What do you want to keep so uneasy all the whole time for?"

"A man rusts out a cussed sight quicker than he wears out. As a business man, I'm goin' to wear out. Now, I ain't askin' you to get out of earshot of that garden sass of yours. Speed and I will take the brunt of this thing. And it's a dead open-and-shut money-maker of a scheme I've got. Part of the thinkin' has been mine, and part Speed's. I got the nub of it all by myself, and then I sent for him. He used to be in the show business with me, and I knew what he could do when it comes to puttin' the frills onto a scheme. Aaron, we've framed up a proposition that's like milkin' sunshine into a pint bottle, sayin' 'presto,' and havin' it turn out liquid gold."

10

"I've heard a feller bark in front of a circus tent and say things like that," growled the cap'n.

"Not to throw bouquets at myself," broke in Mr. Speed, flecking off cigarette ashes airily. "I'm on the top wave, sitting on the life buoy, Cap'n Sproul, when it comes to doping canny grabs for the kale. I hope you'll listen to my friend Look. We've sure got a winner."

"Then talk sense if you want me to listen," advised the cap'n. "Up to date you've only been makin' noises like one of them steam-music wagons which close in the tail end of a circus parade. Brief, short, and to the point, now, what is it?" He fixed baleful eye on Mr. Speed. "I'll advise ye, to start with, that it'll be dangerous to try to sell me a gold brick."

"Say, hold on, there, Aaron," snorted his old friend. "You're slurrin' now. I'm a business man, and I'll talk business! We own that land together. Neither one wants to buy or sell. We've talked all that over in the past. It's good property to hold on to. Now, then! You remember that spring of water that we found in the cave? I've had it analyzed, and it's purer than the infant's tear, sweeter than the maiden's kiss, and since Moses struck the rock and watered the tribes of—"

"I've heard that whole tune played through before now on a hand organ," interposed Cap'n Sproul coldly. "What was this business you have come on?"

Hiram swallowed hard, plainly realizing that expletives would not serve him at this juncture.

"You don't understand, Aaron, what kind of profits can be made out of water. I've been lookin' into the matter, and I *do* understand! I mean, the right kind of water, put up to the right people in the right way."

"I understand," stated Cap'n Sproul, with exasperating indifference.

"But I say you don't—not about water handled right."

"I tell you I *do*," insisted the cap'n. "Take that spring to hell, and you can get ten cents a swaller for all the water she'll run."



The cap'n shook hands grudgingly, without rising.

Again Hiram gulped, and repressed his anger.

"Seem' that you understand the profits in a water venture so well, I won't have to argue that side with you, Aaron. All is, will you, as my pardner in the timber tract, go in with me and develop the spring, with the understanding that all the business details will be handled by me and Speed? I haven't got any garden sass to take up my attention, and I've got plenty of time to devote to selling that water to an eager public. You'll be president of the company, with nothin' to do except advise if you feel that way and draw your profits. There, I've made it short and to the point!"

Cap'n Sproul stared from one to the other. His cold eye bored them.

"Have you two got the general idee that because I've retired from business and public office I've packed away all my common sense with a handful of moth balls? I told you not to try to sell me any gold bricks. You're goin' farther than that—you're talkin' to me as though I was eleven months old, and

set here playin' with a rattle. What's behind all this?"

"It's only a square business project to put a good water on the market. There's a fortune in water if it's handled right. Fortunes have been made. It's only a matter of handlin' the thing right."

"Exactly so," affirmed Speed, snapping away his cigarette butt. "We're going to handle that water in a modern way for modern people, and the frame-up is a cinch. It sure is!"

"You give me your word, do you," went on the cap'n, confining himself to Hiram, hunching an expressive shoulder in the direction of Mr. Speed, "that all you want to do is to sell water off'n that tract of ours?"

"I give you my word."

"You'll excuse me for suspectin' something else when you started in on me, but the only times I've found you without any apparent moral sense is when you've got to circussin'. And your first talk to me sounded like another one of those circus spells. As I understand it, this water business is

goin' to take up considerable of your time—and his?"

"We shan't have a minute for anything else."

"Then go ahead and sell water. It may keep you out of doin' something worse. And you'll have to excuse me, for I've got to go and bug my squashes."

He started for his garden, waving gesture of assent when Hiram called after him that he would bring around the usual papers of agreement for signature.

Hiram appeared with the said papers the next day, hunting up Cap'n Sproul in the garden. The cap'n was stacking bush beans, and took the paper in a pair of remarkably dirty hands.

"You ain't goin' to keep runnin' in here every day or two, are you, botherin' a busy man with foolishness?" he inquired by way of preface.

"After you sign that, all the rest of the details will be taken off your shoulders by me and Speed," Hiram assured him. "You ain't even goin' to be called on for an assessment on stock. We figger we've got a self-actin' proposition."

"Once more, now, this scheme is only to sell plain water?"

"Read the name of the company for yourself, Aaron." Hiram ran his finger along certain lines on the paper. "'The Thrill-of-Life Water Company. Captain Aaron Sproul, ex-sheriff of Cuxabexis County, president—'"

"I don't see any need of riggin' me with all that extra balloon canvas in the way of title," demurred the cap'n.

"Nothin' like puttin' a scheme before the people right," insisted Hiram. "I told you this thing was goin' to be handled right. So it is. I ain't goin' to bother you with details, because, as I understand it, you don't want to be bothered. I'm secretary and treasurer, and Speed is general manager. All tight, and all buttoned."

"I don't have to mix and mess with that loco-foco cigaretter, do I?"

"I don't like to hear you refer to friends of mine and business associates in that kind of a slightin' way—but you won't have to meet Mr. Speed ex-

cept at annual meetin's of the company," returned Hiram stiffly.

He shoved his fountain pen into the cap'n's hands, and the latter signed.

"Aaron, I'm goin' to surprise you with this thing," stated Hiram enthusiastically. "I wish you wasn't so much taken up with this garden business. I'd like to sit right down here and unfold details. I'm goin' to show you what headwork can do. I never would have got anywhere in my business if it hadn't been for headwork."

Cap'n Sproul had relighted his pipe, and was twitching more bush beans out of the ground.

"Men placed as I have been when I was gettin' my start in life would have jumped overboard, bein' too poor to buy a pistol to blow out their brains with. It's many the feller I've seen go to pan-handlin' for nickels or flaggin' the main drag for hand-outs of cold grub. And once down, they've stayed there. But as for me, I broke through with a hen, a feather duster, and a few packages of ten-cent dyes."

Cap'n Sproul straightened, and stared at his friend.

"Made the Royal Peeruvian Cockatoo, and cleared ten dollars a day on the punkin circuit till I had money enough to fake the Grand, Astounding Mormon Giant," explained the old showman.

"Look-a-here," demanded the cap'n, "you tell me again what you are goin' to do with that paper and our timber tract."

"Sell water from that spring. Just sell water from that spring. I'm tellin' you straight."

"So do, then. But you'd better forget how you got your start. You might go to mixin' something with that water. You ain't responsible when you get onto one of those circus strains. You know it's understood between you and me that the next time you get me into a scrape, either your widdier or mine will be collectin' life insurance?"

"There's no call for threats," advised Hiram, departing. "I tell you I'm goin' to sell water. But there's a certain way of sellin' water which makes it worth

more than water sold to turn a mill wheel."

Leaving that cryptic utterance with his friend, he straddled out of the garden over the rows of growing things.

It would have been plain to Cap'n Sproul, had he bothered to think of the matter at all, that the affairs of the Thrill-of-Life Water Company were progressing without requiring the fostering care of the president. As a matter of fact, the cap'n allowed Hiram's scheme to slip out of his mind. It seemed a trivial deal—this marketing of spring water. The suitable arrangement of a bountiful harvest in his cellar seemed of more real moment to Cap'n Sproul, and therefore his time and attention were well taken up for several weeks.

In the height of his absorption he refrained from going to the post office for several days. When he did trudge down for his mail, his box was stuffed full of letters, and the postmaster handed out to him an overflow bundle of them, tied up in a parcel as big as a brick.

When a man's mail for some years has been limited to a few newspapers and letters bringing quarterly checks for dividends on vessel property, such a deluge of letters makes for astonishment. But he did not care to afford any public spectacle of his surprise. He stuffed the letters into his big pockets, and started for home. Behind the woodbine on his piazza he opened the first letter which came to hand on the top of the pile. He read with glasses on the end of his nose and a scowl on his brow, and he read it from end to end. He was seeking for a clew to the mystery of this downpour of correspondence.

It was dated from a town in Pennsylvania, and was addressed to "Capt. Sheriff A. Sproul, President of The Thrill-of-Life Water Co."

DEAR SIR: I have read the wonderful accounts of your spring of water which gives new life to him or her who may be a drinker of it. I write becaws a man who has held your posishun is not likely to be a fake, and so I write and enclose a one-dollar postal noat for which you will please send me as

large a jug of the Trill-of-Life Water as you feel able so to do. I would not write and send money to a perfect stranger like this if I was not shure that having held high office you must be honest and well known in your section, and so I shall fall back upon you if the goods are not as represented. Plesse send in a hurry, for my main truble is assma, and I have hard wurk to kepe breathing. Yours and so forth,

L. M. STRONK.

Cap'n Sproul turned the postal note over and over, and reread the letter. The threat in the latter part of it held his attention for some moments, and his scowl deepened.

Then he began to open the other letters. But he did not read these with the care he had expended upon Mr. Stronk's epistle—for they were mostly of the same tenor. Many inclosed postage stamps, dollar bills, or other forms of currency or orders; many begged that he send along jugs of his water in order to save from the grave poor, sick sufferers who were not able to pay. The recital of human ills made such dreadful chapters that he merely skimmed the bulk of the letters. His flesh crawled at the realization that so many people in the world had such things to trouble them, and it seemed as though he were hearing about matters of which he had no right to know.

Cap'n Sproul had never had experience with the intricacies of successful advertising. How he had become the object of this epistolary onslaught he could not understand; why the invalids of the world had picked him out as father confessor for their secret maladies, he was wholly at a loss to determine. To be sure, he was addressed as President of The Thrill-of-Life Water Company. But he had never heard that water—plain water—was a panacea for all human ills.

At last an envelope disgorged something which shed considerable light on the situation. It was a clipping from a newspaper. The letter stated that the writer had sent on the newspaper account in order to obtain confirmation as to its truth. He said, the writer did, that he knew he would get the straight facts from a man who had been high sheriff of his county, and only awaited

such reply before sending on money enough to buy a barrel of the water, intending to retail the same in his section of the country.

The clipping contained reading that was in no way a regulation advertisement, nor did it seem to have any relation to advertising. It appeared to be a straight news account of an interesting happening. It was dated at Squaretown in his State, the settlement which was nearest the timber tract that he and Hiram Look owned. He began to read the article:

The strange case of Zealor Tute has stirred up great excitement in this section of the country. About a year ago Tute, who is a man nearly seventy years old, after a quarrel with some relatives with whom he lived, packed his few belongings on his back, and disappeared in the woods.

Nothing was heard from him until a few days ago, when he reappeared in Squaretown. But no one recognized him as the man who had passed through the place a year before, and only the most positive identification by his relatives has convinced the public that he is really old Zealor Tute.

When he went into the woods he was aged, and bent, and had snow-white hair and beard. Now he looks twenty or even thirty years younger. He is straight and active, and his hair and beard are dark. He tells a marvelous story. He says that after prowling about the forest for a time he discovered a cave, and took up his residence in it in order to avoid any hunt that his relatives might make for him. There was a cold, sparkling spring in the cave, its waters flowing away into a crevice between the rocks, and therefore hidden from any person who merely passed the mouth of the cavern.

When he first drank the water it produced a curious numbness in the region of his stomach, so he affirms, and for a few days he did not repeat the experiment. But there was no other water in the neighborhood, and he began to drink again, and found that the sensation, though singular, did not trouble him seriously. In fact, as the days went by, he began to feel strangely exhilarated after drinking. New strength came to him. The usual infirmities of age left him gradually. He noted with surprise that his beard and hair were growing darker. Then, in the parlance of the day, he "stayed by" that spring, and drank regularly and copiously. To-day he is exhibiting himself as a man not

merely dragged back from the grave, but dragged back into middle age.

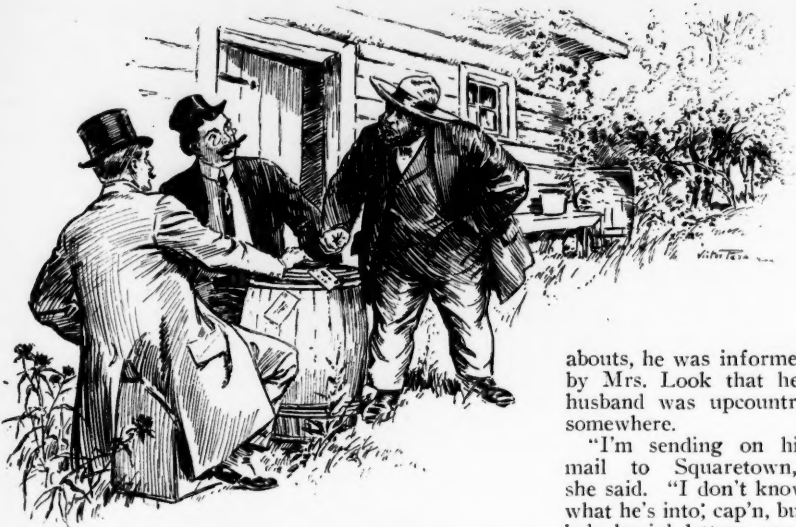
The greatest question is, has he discovered the secret for which Ponce de Leon searched? For centuries mankind has believed in a mysterious water which will give new life. Has not sly Nature hidden one of these wonderful springs in this cave in the virgin solitude? Here is Zealor Tute, well, and strong, and apparently young again. He firmly believes that if he keeps on drinking the water he will recover all his lost youth. Perhaps he is too sanguine. But the fact remains that he has apparently lost his ailments, of which he had many. He says that all his ills are cured.



The postmaster handed out to him an overflow bundle of them, tied up in a parcel as big as a brick.

Investigation has shown that this wonderful spring in its cave is located on land owned by prominent citizens of Scotaze in this State. One of the owners is Captain Aaron Sproul, for some years high sheriff of his county, a wealthy shipowner and a man of the highest standing. His copartner in the ownership is Hiram Look, Esquire, formerly connected with some of America's leading amusement enterprises. Therefore, the ownership of the water is vested in gentlemen who will use it only for the best good of humanity.

They have already taken prompt steps to preserve it. The mouth of the cave is now guarded, and no one will be admitted until expert investigation has been made. In order to protect the property until the full truth is



"You've gone to work and stuck me up on a pole before the American public for 'em to fire letters and dollar bills at."

known and the water can be utilized for the benefit of humanity, Messrs. Sproul and Look have organized "The Thrill-of-Life Spring Water Company." It is not as yet a commercial enterprise, but later some arrangements may be made to distribute the water to suffering mankind.

At this point, Cap'n Sproul gasped, rolled up his eyes, and made motions with his mouth, without being able, apparently, to utter a sound. He stared at the letters that were heaped in front of him, corners of postal notes and bills protruding here and there, and hinting at the mess into which he had been precipitated.

He glanced again at the clipping, and saw that there was nearly a column more, but he had no further appetite for that amazing document in which his name appeared now and then with all his titles and honors appended.

He stuffed the litter into his capacious pockets, slammed on his hat, and started across lots for Hiram Look's castle. Arrived there, and gasping incoherent requests for information as to said Hiram Look's present where-

abouts, he was informed by Mrs. Look that her husband was upcountry somewhere.

"I'm sending on his mail to Squaretown," she said. "I don't know what he's into, cap'n, but he's havin' letters come by the bushel, nighabout. Perhaps you know; he dropped something to

me about you and him going in partners on a little speculation. He's a master hand at keeping things moving, Hiram is," added his admiring wife.

"He's got me movin' at present writin'," affirmed the cap'n, with a balefulness that did not become a partner. "I'm movin' now toward Squaretown, and, if I happen to cross that husband of yours on the way and miss him, will you kindly tell him that I shall be movin' back this way on an air line, and for him to stay lighted right here till I catch up with him?"

He whirled on his heel, and hurried away.

He jolted into Squaretown the next forenoon, arriving via a branch railroad which ended at the settlement. He lost no time in hiring a buckboard, and started for the timber tract along a tortuous tote road whose rocks jarred such a succession of vehement words out of him that his driver dodged every now and then as though he expected a blow to follow some of the climaxes of language.

The last half mile of his journey Cap'n Sproul made on foot, for the tote road ended at the bottom of the slope on which the timber tract was located. He lost his way several times, having only a dim memory of where the cave was located. In the late afternoon he tumbled out of the undergrowth into a clearing. Seated at the door of a woodman's shack was Hiram Look, an incongruous figure with his plug hat in the midst of that forest wilderness. Mr. Speed was with him, and they were sorting letters.

His tramp up the rugged slope had left Cap'n Sproul little breath. He marched up to his business associates, tugging his own letters from his pockets. He banged down handful after handful on the head of the barrel that served the two as a table.

"Well," remarked Hiram blandly, after surveying this new contribution, "it certainly does beat Tophet how advertisin' pays, providin' it's the right sort of advertisin', and is put up to the public in a genteel fashion. There ain't any need of tellin' you, Aaron, that our little popgun has rung the bell on the target! Didn't I tell you that the proposition, as we had it framed, was a dead-open-and-shut one?"

"You see," stated Mr. Speed, taking advantage of the cap'n's continued speechlessness, "there's nothing like being able to deal a few picture cards from the bottom of the pack when it comes to the advertising game. The water spec is a good one, because your raw material comes bubbling forth from Nature's breast, free gratis and for nothing. But look at the newspapers and the magazines, and figure what it costs in good, hard coin to keep those waters in the eye of the public. Friend Look says to me: 'Let's sell water, for raw water costs us nothing.' Then up comes little me with the main idea and the frills for same! About once in so often the great American newspaper bunch will stand for a fake story. All the exchange editors will bite. It's a good story, and it gets boosted along."

Mr. Speed picked up a clipping, and snapped it out like a banner.

"There she is! Copied into about every Sunday paper between the Atlantic and Pacific, and still traveling! One hundred thousand dollars' worth of advertising that didn't cost us a cent. A fortune made for us overnight. Only necessary to follow our hand!"

Hiram was smiling and nodding assent to these observations, and at the same time was busily extracting the bills and postal notes from Cap'n Sproul's letters, making notes of amounts on the envelopes and filing them—a real picture of brisk business.

"I warned Friend Look that there'd be results," added Mr. Speed. "But look there! This is a freshet. We're fairly swamped before we're ready for business."

"All is, we've got to have an imitation typewritten letter struck off," said Hiram, "president's name signed, saying that letter from patient has been received and noted, and sufferer has our deepest sympathy, and that water will be forwarded as soon as matters can be adjusted and arranged, and so forth, and so forth. We talk to 'em as though we were philanthropists simply distributing this water for the sake of helping mankind. See? It's the best play to make."

"I don't care what kind of a letter you write, so long as that money goes back in it to them devilish fools," roared the cap'n, beating his fist on the head of the barrel. "You've gone to work and stuck me up on a pole before the American public for 'em to fire letters and dollar bills at, threatening me if I don't deliver goods. You—you damnation Modocs!"

In the ecstacy of his rage he beat in the head of the barrel.

Hiram and Mr. Speed waited until his fury had moderated. They smiled at each other. It was an indulgent, pitying sort of a smile.

"You've gone to meddlin' with details, contrary to mutual understandin', and against the bylaws laid down in our articles of incorporation," said Hiram in the first lull. "Details will all be attended to in due course of business, sufferers jollied on, water delivered as

soon as rush of orders permits, and everybody suited, salved, and satisfied. Aaron, I advise you to keep your shirt on and the wris'bands well buttoned. You'll make a better appearance that way before the great American public."

"You see, Mr. President," proceeded Speed suavely, "the plot has only just begun to thicken. Of course, talking right here in the privacy of our directors' room, as you might say, we can admit to each other that our water will not give back the vanished youth nor cure the ills to which humanity is subject. It will not——"

"Cure! You brass-shelled, cigarette-suckin' doodle bug, that water won't cure a case of smut on the nose, and you know it, and I know it, and right away the whole world will know it, and I'll be the one they'll all land on, and if it wasn't for the extra expense of gettin' your bodies out over that tote road to a cemetery, I'd slaughter the two of you right here and now."

"I'm glad to note that reason is beginning to prevail in our president's mind, even in regard to such a minor thing as a well-conducted murder," stated Mr. Speed blandly. "Therefore, we may expect that reason will now proceed to grapple with the larger question of the future of the Thrill-of-Life Water Company. First of all, Mr. President, I have to inform you that I have put much time and thought onto this proposition, and have got it started on the way to success, and if you go to butting in and making talk or writing letters to hurt our business, I'll sue for slander and damages. Only one word to the wise! Your name is down all fair and square on our contract, and you've got to stand your hand."

"Hiram," choked Cap'n Sproul, "I had your solemn word that all this scheme amounted to was to sell water."

"Blast it all, ain't that what we're tryin' to do?" snapped the old showman. "You don't see any distillery or powder factory here, do you, or read anything in our advertising about any other goods except water? We're *goin'* to sell it, but it's *goin'* to be sold with all the trimmin's."

"The whole three of us will be in jail inside of a week," mourned Cap'n Sproul, stamping around the broken barrel. "Of all the men in all the world, I'm the most cussed in the friends I make. But you ain't a friend, Look! You're a cheap, low-down, circus-fakin' grafter, and for four years your principal business has been grabbin' me by the ears and rammin' me into trouble."

"For a man who hasn't anything to do just now except sit down on his piazza and have money brought to him in a bushel basket, you certainly are ringin' the cane in the line of general dissatisfaction! This thing is all goin' to work out fine and proper. Let me and Speed alone. This here is only the first splurge. Wait till you see the rest!"

"The rest! Ain't you got to the limit of your dod-buffed career of devilishness yet? What are you goin' to do now, with my name on as president?"

"Sell water," stated Hiram calmly. "Sell it *right*. And sellin' it right don't mean peddlin' it over the country in bottles and jugs to be yanked up for usin' the United States mails to defraud. You don't catch us that way, Aaron. There's nothin' for you to worry about! I tell you we've got a dead-open-and-shut plan. All you've got to do is sit tight, and grow fat watchin' the game."

It occurred to Cap'n Sproul that his rage and his rebuke were not the sort of can openers with which to tackle this brassy surface which the two conspirators presented to him. His rage had been dulled by its own inefficiency; his rebuke had been turned by their calm callousness.

Hiram was rescuing the letters from the depths of the battered barrel, and was resorting them. Mr. Speed resumed work on some kind of writing with which he was engaged and on which he was lavishing much care, rolling his eyes as he pondered, and exhibiting the rapt air of a lyric poet.

The president of the Thrill-of-Life Water Company had it borne in on him that the board meeting was dissolved for the present.



He sat down in the gloom beside the spring, and sullenly pondered on the situation.

He looked up, and spied the mouth of the famous cave, a black hole that glowered at him from the hillside. So he climbed there, and entered.

It was a deep, rocky crevice, only dimly lighted by the sunshine on account of its narrow mouth. It extended back at least a hundred feet into the hill, and he felt his way along the granite wall, seeking the water whose splashing he heard far in the mystic recesses of the cavern.

He sat down in the gloom beside the spring, and sullenly pondered on the situation. Hiram's last assurance that he and Speed understood the danger in trifling with the United States mails brought some element of comfort to him. It was evident that the unspeakable schemers had a deeper plot than mere mail-order business in plain water.

He felt his curiosity stirring, but he was too angry still and too proud to go

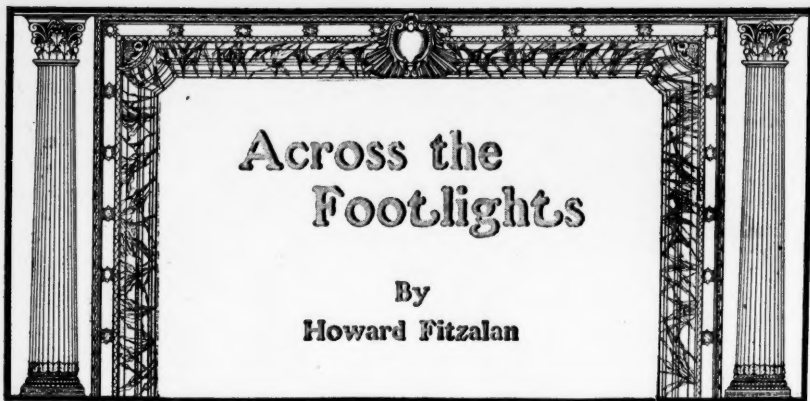
out and ask his partners for further information. The fact that he was now advertised to the four corners of the country as the president of the unutterable speculation formed the principal topic of his ponderings.

And those ponderings led him to a decision. In spite of the promise of his associates to relieve him of responsibility in "details," he concluded that he would stick by for a while, and keep his eye out.

"Seein' that I'm shanghaied aboard this cussed pirate craft and have a right to the quarter-deck, I'll stay and keep a hand on the wheel and an eye on the binnacle," mused Cap'n Aaron Sproul. "There's this much to say about water as a stock in trade; it won't hurt nobody unless they fall into too much of it. And the more water folks drink, the less they'll drink of other things. So, let out reef tacks, and head as she's goin'."

Under the title: "Z. Tute; Exhibit A," some remarkable developments in the affairs of the "Thrill-of-Life" Water Company will be related in the December SMITH'S.





Across the Footlights

By
Howard Fitzalan

THERE is madness in store for any one who attempts to properly label and put into place that singular person, George Bernard Shaw. Yet over in London they do so every day; counting that one lost when some explanation, palliation, or refutation of his beliefs does not appear. We have the attempt of a very clever man to prove he is a Puritan—see Chesterton's semibiography; René Deacon's brochure to show him an exalted mystic; and lesser men's attacks on his debauched mind and lack of religion. The point is, nobody agrees. Nobody ever does agree in explaining a genius.

Shaw satirizes all this in his "induction" to "Fanny's First Play." The habit of writing prefaces that poke fun at any one who tries to explain or criticize him has so grown on Shaw that now he has put one of his prefaces into dialogue and has it acted before the piece itself. It appears to show that a modern young lady has written a play, and her doting father has hired actors and stage managers to interpret it. Also, he hires critics—he gets them cheaper than actors, Shaw explains. The critics are not told the name of the author of the piece. They are to give an unbiased criticism.

There is much Shavian topsy-turvydom in this induction, and it drags abominably, for Shaw is apt to forget

his public when exploiting one of his personal grievances, but when the curtain rises one is immediately rewarded.

Just what Shaw hopes to accomplish by preaching social anarchy to the settled idealess middle classes of England is his own affair. It is vastly entertaining to outsiders to see all their beliefs blasted, their ideas dethroned, and themselves left floundering without rudder or compass.

"When anything out of the usual rut happens to us," says the wife of a respectable tradesman in this piece, "we don't know what to do. We have no beliefs, no convictions, only customs."

At least, that is the gist of the speech.

It looks as if Shaw, having exhausted all the mental bombs in his locker, has simply taken to making fun of everything he doesn't like, and to exploiting two rather formless beliefs of his—one in woman as a mystic, the other in the ability of the average woman to outgeneral the average man. The women he creates are, without doubt, purely Shavian mouthpieces. He expresses his ideas through the women of his plays, instead of the men. In "Fanny's First Play," every male person in the piece, except the footman, suffers from mental atrophy, while all of the women are alert and superior.

Another mystic of his, a certain disagreeable *Mrs. George*—an impossible

character—exists in "Getting Married." It is difficult to understand her, just as it is difficult to understand the mother of the girl in this piece. The (generally) unmentionable young lady, *Darling Dora*, companion of *Bobby* on his spree, is well enough; alert, companionable, breezy; and one can sympathize with the Puritan's daughter, *Margaret*, who, after leaving prayer meeting, has an uncontrollable desire to be free for a single night to enjoy life in untrammelled fashion; one can also despise the caddish *Bobby*, alternately laugh at, and feel sorry for, the two middle-class husbands, *Gilbey* and *Knox*, but when the girl, *Margaret*, after having spent two weeks in jail in consequence of her single night's jollification, announces to her father that she is proud of it and will tell all the neighbors and acquaintances, one feels that Shavian theory has replaced natural dialogue. *Margaret* may have been proud of cutting loose and justifiably proud also of resenting police tyranny, but proud of actual residence in jail—well, hardly, especially when her father begs on his knees for silence.

The mother's attitude—the Shavian mother, quoting Bible texts one moment and advanced Maeterlinckism the next—is inexplicable. The father, a pompous little tradesman, is human—pitiable and laughable by turns.

The second character was *Juggins*, the footman. It turns out that *Juggins* is a "courtesy" lord, the son of a duke; that he has become a servant because he once took advantage of his position to be insulting to one of his own lackeys. He and *Mrs. Knox* are in the same class. As he says:

"No one will understand me but *Mrs. Knox*."

And nobody did!

To attempt any résumé of the quaint situations and turns of character in "Fanny's First Play" would be to recite things that would sound incredible without Shaw's cleverness of dialogue behind them; for if Shaw did not write the piece there is another giant in the land. True, he does not acknowledge the authorship openly. "*Fanny's First*

Play," by "*Blank*." So reads the billing; and, in the epilogue, when the hired dramatic critics appear to discuss the play, he quotes every argument for and against himself that any one else could imagine, taking cruel pleasure in giving the critics foolish speeches about himself.

The epilogue finds reasons for ascribing it to other men than Shaw; one gives an argument for Granville Barker, a great stage manager and one who writes in Shaw's manner, with all Shaw's prolixity, but none of his brilliance, and without his wealth of ideas. But there is only one Shaw.

"Fanny's First Play," with the omission of "induction" and "epilogue," should succeed in America. The American theater-goer does not interest himself in the battle between critics and dramatic authors, nor does it read weighty critical articles about Shaw. However, any one with a sense of humor can enjoy "Fanny's First Play," and we ought to see it in New York. But, with Shaw's "The Doctor's Dilemma" still unproduced here, we may not get "Fanny."

"KISMET."

For "Kismet," however, an American future is assured; indeed, before this reaches the reader's eye, "Kismet" may have had its out-of-town *première*. Oddly enough, it is being done by one of the few managers who did not refuse it in manuscript form; for the play is by an American, and was offered to many New York managers before its author decided to try it on the London controllers of dramatic authors' destinies.

Success in London is harder to win than it is here, but Knoblauch struck oil with his first play. He had two here—"The Cottage in the Air," at the New Theater, and "The Faun," which Faversham did, though neither was a popular success. But the hit of "Kismet" in London, as produced by Oscar Asche, with himself and his wife, Lily Brayton, in the leading rôles, is emphatic, and even in the warmest weather it has been difficult to buy seats.

Knoblauch—Edward Knoblauch—describes it as an "Arabian Night." As a matter of fact, it would be more truthful to call it an Arabian melodrama, for coincidence and bloodshed, desperate escapes and opportune rescues, fierce and warlike speeches, and many murders make up the piece, while genies, enchanted carpets, and Aladdin's Lamps, which we invariably associate with the tales of Scheherazade, are absent.

There is a king masquerading as a beggar in it, and a beggar suddenly elevated to high places. Our old friend, the Caliph—not old Haroun, but a descendant—woos the beggar's daughter. The beggar has a vendetta that ends in a double killing, the final one splendidly fierce and realistic, and the way is cleared for Caliph and Beggar Maid to marry. To tell you all the hairbreadth escapes, fights, and so forth, that make up the rest of the piece would be to write a tale of adventure, not a few observations on plays and players.

The splendor of the production—and the American managers will equal, if not outdo, Mr. Asche's sets and costumes—is enough to justify the piece if it were performed in pantomime; and for its gorgeous, yet studiously correct, local color, and its freedom from anachronisms, both author and producer deserve high praise.

But even in a good cause, it is possible to go too far, and the first act of "Kismet" comes close to being dull, so careful is the author to saturate his audience with atmosphere—particularly is this the case in the scene in the Place of the Tailors.

The piece suggests Drury Lane rather than the Garrick. There are twelve changes of scene, and, at one time, fully one hundred and fifty people on the stage. The success is only partly due to the author. He suggests—hardly more. His lines count for less than the pageant.

It is to be hoped, when it comes to engaging performers for the American edition of "Kismet," that the necessity for engaging those accustomed to speaking blank verse will be apparent

to the managers, for the delivery of such lines as "Kismet" has is an art in itself. Shakespearean histrions should be the best for this play.

If done rightly, no one can afford to miss "Kismet." No one in London has. It bears out certain predictions of a few months past that the public is a-hunger again for the big productions. "Kismet" is one of the most expensive we have ever seen.

"PASSERS-BY."

On the other hand; this new piece, by the author of "The Tyranny of Tears" and "Captain Swift," costs nothing at all—for every theatrical storehouse has in it dozens of living-room sets like that of *Peter's*. And the entire action of the piece takes place in that single room—four acts, too.

The cast is extremely small. It was hardly a good vehicle for Gerald Du Maurier. Richard Bennett, who is scheduled for it here, if announcements can be believed, should be much better, for Bennett has a lovable personality, whereas Du Maurier's is somewhat sinister and striking; the look under half-closed lids, the quick, energetic turns of hand and head, the nervous activity, all suggest the hero of a romantic play, or else the polite villain. Irene Vanbrugh, wife of Dion Boucicault, showed to better advantage in the leading female part—the mother of *Peter's* child.

Peter has been separated from her by his aristocratic half sister, who feared he would marry the young lady, but *Peter* did not know about the child. The child clinches matters five years later when the young lady turns up accidentally. *Peter's* fiancée, a good sort, gives *Peter* up, and so forth.

The plot does not sound promising, but it is really not *Peter* nor yet the injured lady that enchains one's attention, but the incidental characters, *Pine*, the valet; *Nightie*, the cabman; and, above all, *Burns*, *Samyuel Burns*, the human derelict—a trio with the true Dickens flavor; in fact, *Burns* would do credit to the master, and, as played by Mr.

O. P. Heggie, is more truly the star character of the piece than any other.

Do not judge "Passers-By" by its "child" plot. It has a wealth of humor and human sympathy. It is too bad, however, that the scene of the piece does not change with the acts. It is a bore to look at the same commonplace set on four risings of the curtain. If Mr. Frohman would convert one scene into *Peter's* library, it would at least break the monotony.

"Passers-By" needs that delightfully intimate acting that the English know so well how to do, and one can only hope that no member of this small cast will be out of place in the American production. It is so easy to spoil a play like this one.

But whether it succeeds or fails in America, no one can deny it is a good play. One grows so tired of this "bowing to public taste." "The public will tell you whether the play is good or not," says a manager fifty times a day. On the contrary, a good play is a good play, whether in manuscript form, in the hands of a stock company, or with an all-star cast; but, if actors and production are not secured to show off and accentuate its points, the public may not come. Perhaps some one will say that "The Scarecrow" is a bad play because it failed? On the same principle, Arnold Bennett is a poor writer, because it has taken the public ten years to recognize him.

THE FOLLIES OF 1911.

There was little enough to interest one in New York in midsummer. The "Folies Bergere" closed its doors, the Winter Garden season came to an end. Lew Fields closed up the Broadway. There was only "The Pink Lady" and "Wallingford," of which you have heard a sufficiency; "The Red Rose," whose turn comes presently; and the perennial "Follies" of Florenz Ziegfeld, Junior—that olla podrida of songs, dances, and travesties, which not to find on the New York Roof in summer would be as incongruous as a June with-

out brides, or a Manhattan July without the remark, "It's not the heat, but the humidity."

George V. Hobart wrote the book this year, taking Harry B. Smith's place, and the dialogue of George is unto the dialogue of Harry as George R. Sims' is to that of Somerset Maugham. Mr. Hobart's parody of "Everywoman," which takes up much of the first portion of the entertainment, could be elided to the benefit of the production; for it lacks humor, and, if intended to teach a moral lesson, teaches only one that was old when Methuselah wore knee trousers, and as for the burlesque of "Pinafore"—that almost approaches sacrilege. For a burlesque to be burlesqued is almost a paradox on the face of it; but, if it is to be burlesqued, the person who does it must be at least as clever as the original writer.

Now, George V. Hobart is a good, industrious humorist; he is to the world of musical comedy what John Kendrick Bangs is to the world of the magazines; he has a union card, and he works union hours, turning out jokes by formula and situations by foot rule, and always delivers his manuscript at the time he promised, but when he takes liberties with an inspired comedian like W. S. Gilbert, it is another matter. This burlesque of "Pinafore" was rightly included among the "follies" of 1911.

The remainder of the entertainment is the good old sparkling Ziegfeld kind with plenty of attractive young women in gowns that were worthy concomitants in attractiveness, and with many new dances and scenic effects. The world has gone mad over "honkatonk" stuff. A "honkatonk," Rollo, was a Western institution. You sat at your table, and you bought your drinks, and they gave you a free show. Mostly the show was made up of "twirling" dances. In these you catch your breath on every fourth bar, shouting "Oh, you!" "Oh, that minstrel man!" and then you substitute two bars of words where only one bar of music grows. "Casey Jones"—you all know that—is a typical "honkatonk" song. The man-

V
1
4
1
2
N
O
V
1
1
XUM

ner of singing it would be something like this:

Ca-sey Jones. (Oh, you Rag-time Casey!)
(Oh, you!) Casey Jones. (Oh, that Casey Jones!)

The words don't matter. It is the raise of the voice, the clapping of the hands, the bending of the knees, and the sliding of the feet. The "Follies"—at least the entertaining portion of it—is made up mostly of that sort of thing—"Texas Tommy," "Whip-Poor-Will," "Bumble-Bee," "Ephraim." Brown and Blyler, a team that once "worked" the original honkatonks; Leon Erroll and Tom Dingle, former burlesque men; and Fanny Brice, who made a New York hit with last year's "Follies," but whom Ziegfeld also found in burlesque—the word is used in its technical theatrical sense—are chiefly responsible for the rendition of these songs, and they do them very well. The big scene is aptly laid on "the Barbary Coast, San Francisco," and is handled with some regard for verisimilitude.

One genuinely comic situation Mr. Hobart certainly evolved. A railway porter and a would-be passenger climb to a great height of scaffolding that looks over all New York. The scene is labeled "Grand Central Station," and they are looking for the would-be's train. The porter carries an alpenstock, and drags the would-be after him by a length of cord, a noose of which is wrapped around the passenger's waist. Any one who has tried to find his train during the rebuilding of the Grand Central will appreciate this scene.

Bessie McCoy and Bert Williams are the featured members of the production, but Miss McCoy has little to do, and Bert Williams' songs, except for "Woodman, Spare That Tree," do not give him the opportunity that "Nobody," "Believe Me," and "That Barber-Shop Chord" did. It is the fashion to rave over Bert Williams as a comedian, and he has drollery and quiet humor certainly, but he is dependent upon his lines and situations, and the truly great comedian should be independent of these. Only a few months

ago we witnessed a performance of "The Smart Set" by a colored organization, headed by a certain S. H. Dudley. As a comedian, he far outshone Bert Williams, and besides was responsible for the staging of the piece and its musical numbers. The scenery was worn and drab, had seen good service, the costumes were not lovely, and some of the chorus girls wore lisle-thread stockings, but for perfect harmony in dance and song there has been nothing to excel these colored people on Broadway; so that, if it is to become the fashion, this mixing up of colored with white performers, some one should put S. H. Dudley into a Broadway house.

However, the "Follies" will survive all criticism. Ziegfeld catches the spirit of the day in these revues. They excel their famous prototypes—those at the Paris theaters.

"THE RED ROSE."

Here is a clever book to an American comedy! Will wonders never cease? It was originally a three-act comedy—Broadway gossips say—by "Bob" Smith. Bob—Robert B.—is the brother of Harry B., and Harry has written all the American musical comedies that Glen McDonough and George V. Hobart do not claim. So Harry, having a contract and much advance money to write a piece for Valeska Suratt, took Bob into partnership and his three-act comedy as an excuse. The comedy would have done just as well without music, for Robert Hood Bowers has not written an inspiring score.

Had the piece read: "Adapted from the French," it would have seemed more natural that sparkling wit should flow through its manuscript. As it is, we must congratulate Bob Smith, and regard him as the rejuvenator of the American musical-comedy stage.

Of course, for Valeska Suratt, the piece must be laid in Paris, but happily it is far removed from "The Girl with the Whooping Cough," which gave Miss Suratt a certain notoriety. "The Red Rose" is, in fact, cleaner than most musical plays. A truly remarkable cast has given the piece additional value.

The Trail of the Sheridan Heir

By Virginia Middleton

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

V.—The Conclusion of the Whole Matter

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING PARTS

Gerald Cromartin, the son of a Dublin barrister, is sent to the United States to discover the whereabouts of a certain Peter Sheridan, who went there many years before and who is now the heir to large estates. If Sheridan is no longer living the property goes to a niece, Nora Braisted. On the way to Montreal, Gerald meets a charming young woman, Kathleen Fletcher, and also a jeweler of Denver named La Shelle, and his wife. Mrs. La Shelle asks Gerald to deliver a small package to her sister in New York. Miss Fletcher sees him receive this package. On the frontier Gerald is stopped by United States customs officers, under suspicion that he has been made a dupe of by the La Shelles, and is smuggling pearls. Nothing dutiable, however, is found in the package. Gerald concludes from what seems good evidence that Miss Fletcher was his accuser. He goes to New York, and on the way there is mistaken by a leader of anarchists for a foreign prince, is kidnaped, and taken to Paterson. When it is being deliberated as to what shall be done with him, Miss Fletcher appears, shows the anarchists their mistake, and obtains Gerald's release. Following up a clue that Peter Sheridan was once in Bluevale, Kentucky, Gerald goes there. He meets there a Judge Hathaway and goes with him to his tobacco plantation. The judge's tobacco barns are burned by rival growers. During the fight that follows the judge is wounded, and taken to the house of an old lady, Mrs. Birdsong, who turns out to be Kathleen Fletcher's grandmother. Gerald meets Kathleen, but is accorded a frigid reception. A young man named Gilroy is suspected of being the judge's assailant, but he manages to make his escape. Gerald discovers that Kathleen has given Gilroy a valuable ring to provide him with funds. Kathleen goes to Denver where she is teaching school. Gerald visits her there. Afterward Gerald runs across Gilroy, and buys from him the pawn ticket for the ring.

GERALD found himself forced to keep his mind very firmly fixed upon the bright fact that it was to be his privilege to serve Kathleen Fletcher without even the reward of recognition, in order to maintain his spirits, when finally the trail upon which his limping friend had set him led him back to his party. He, good sportsman, as he had always esteemed himself, had warned and frightened away the quarry. He, the man of honor, had quite deliberately sold out his host and his companions. Surely his acquaintance with that cold, fiery, plain, beautiful, generally contradictory young woman was leading him into strange paths!

It seemed to him, as he rode the ascending trail under the cloudless blue of the sky, with the balsamic odors of pine and juniper in his nostrils, that he could still hear the mocking laughter of the boy whom he had befriended. It required all the comfort that the impact of the pawn ticket with his fingers was able to bestow to keep him from riding

back into the clearing and taking his chances against young Gilroy with a revolver.

But he did not. Instead, he plugged doggedly forward, and by and by was met by one of the Dennisons, riding back in search of him. He took a tight-rope hold of the paper in his pocket, and advanced with a glib tale of how he had come to lose and to refine the track. And Gilroy's laughter sounded so loud in his ears as he made the fluent false explanation that he wondered Dennison did not also hear it.

The expedition was entirely fruitless, although when, in due course of time, the posse rounded the ascent, and the inclosed valley lay spread before them, eight or nine hundred feet below, one of them with spyglasses made out the gray shelter hung upon the gray face of the boulder.

Tortuously they made their way to it, clambering down declivities, stealing noiselessly through forest aisles, but only to find the cabin empty when they

arrived. They were left in no doubt as to its being the hiding place of the man whom they sought, for stuck to the doorpost by a sharp-pointed knife was a penciled message—a derisive good-by. And within, the water with which Gilroy had quenched his fire was still wet upon the ashes and the earthen floor; the blanket and the fir branches on which he had slept seemed still to bear the impress of his form.

Gerald was conscious of a strange gladness that the boy had actually escaped—that no accident, no bravado had delayed his departure. However inexplicable Kathleen's love for him was, still, since she did love him, Gerald did not want to be present when misfortune, however richly deserved, befell him.

The Denisons and their friends and neighbors were savage, of course; but there was a certain fatalism in their anger. Of course, Gilroy had gotten away—Gilroy always got away! But some day he would not escape—that also was written in the same book that decreed him so much immunity.

"Only I hope I'll be on hand when they do catch him!" was Mr. Dennison's grim summing up of the situation.

Ranch life lost its interest for the young man from the British Isles very shortly after Mr. Edward Gilroy evaded the penalty of his misdeeds. The Rocky Mountains, the late snows, the hunting trips, the amazing mingling of primitive and sybaritic conditions in the big ranch house—all these ceased to amuse or to distract his thoughts from the busy little apartment in Denver where his old friend, Mrs. Birdsong, was visiting her erratic granddaughter.

Meantime, there was mailed to a certain house of accommodation, in Cincinnati, a money order covering the loan upon a ring, together with very precise instructions to the proprietor of the pawnshop about the disposal of the bauble. The postmaster at Buffalo Peak wondered a good deal about the habits of the apparently prosperous and orderly young gentleman who found it necessary to send so large a sum of money to the address to which Ned Gilroy had

occasionally sent smaller sums. He even went so far, after the pleasant habit of his kind, to marvel aloud upon the subject after Mr. Cromartin had made his escape from the insistent hospitality of his Western hosts.

Denver, to which the train slowly and tortuously carried him down from the heights, following the windings of a mountain stream, received him with brilliant, late-winter sunshine, with liveliness, bustle, and activity. But all his mind was upon one small, sunny apartment, whose windows looked up toward the purple and white heights of the snowy mountains, where there dwelt three of those strange, independent American girls, and one in particular.

He did not notify the flat dwellers of his intention to call upon them. The visit, he explained somewhat laboriously to himself, was to Mrs. Birdsong. He did not need to acquaint her granddaughter with his purpose—especially as her granddaughter might interpose some objection, such as that Mrs. Birdsong was out or asleep, or what not. No, it was much better to make his visit unannounced.

It was the newspaper woman who opened the door to him—Miss Rowley of the bright, inquisitive, quizzical eyes, and the little, crooked smile that seemed to be half mocking. She was enveloped in a long, blue-checked apron, and for a second she seemed a trifle taken aback by the sight of the irreproachable young man who stood at her threshold.

"Oh!" she said. "I thought it was the man from the plumber. There's something the matter with the waterback on the range. I don't suppose, Mr. Cromartin, that you understand much about the ways of waterbacks and ranges?"

She had led him into the pretty, simple, bright sitting room, which seemed, at the moment, more homelike to Gerald than any other room he had ever sat in.

"You remember my famous compatriot who had never tried to play the fiddle, but was perfectly willing to make the effort?" laughed Gerald. "If you'd like to have me attempt to play under study for the fortunate gentleman whom you were awaiting, I shall be charmed."

"No, thank you," returned Miss Rowley, who had unostentatiously divested herself of her apron.

She looked at him musingly for a second, and then she remarked abruptly:

"Kathleen is not at home."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Cromartin, in tones of polite, though remote, interest. "But my call was primarily for Mrs. Birdsong."

"She's back in Kentucky these two weeks. She wouldn't stay after she had felt the first little chilly hint of spring; she had business with her tulips or something at home."

Gerald's "Oh!" was rather crestfallen this time, and Miss Rowley looked at him mischievously.

"The dear old girl is quite an ally of yours," she remarked.

"An ally?" Gerald's tone was, he flattered himself, the very perfection of courteous incomprehension.

"Yes—with Kathie."

Theresa Rowley dared him, with her bright eyes, to deny the imputation of her words. Gerald, meeting her gaze, abandoned his pose of indifference, and laughed.

"You are wonderfully direct," he told her.

"I'm Western," she interpolated.

"As a matter of fact," he went on, ignoring her interruption, "I do need a friend at court—do I not?"

"Oh, I don't know." Theresa folded her arms back of her head, and leaned against the cushions of her long lounging chair in an attitude of ease which Mr. Cromartin felt that his mother would disapprove. "I don't know. A friend at court sometimes makes a man's name a boring sound in a lady's ears. If you had the skill to play your own cards——"

She looked at him dreamily, as though weighing his capacities. Gerald leaned eagerly forward.

"What do you mean, Miss Rowley? Of course, I see that I might as well make a clean breast of it. Miss Fletcher has probably already told you——"

"Kathleen? Told me?" Theresa laughed unaffectedly. "Really, if that's

the way you read Kathleen's character, it's no wonder you haven't made much headway with her. She's a woman with a sense of honor, Mr. Cromartin. A suitor's feelings are to her sacred things. She would not boast about them for worlds. Now, as for me, if a man ever proposes to me—which happens all too seldom—I grab the first acquaintance I meet, and tell her all about it. But not so Kathleen. Mrs. Birdsong, however, has no such reserves concerning her granddaughter. And for the matter of that, I can see about as far into a milestone as the next comer. I don't need a chart and a dictionary to tell when a man is in love with Kathleen."

"I suppose loads of them are?" said Gerald wistfully.

"Enough," was Miss Rowley's terse reply.

"And yet you think that if I had wit enough to play my cards aright——"

"Oh, I'm not by any means sure of it. Don't let your native masculine conceit run away with you. But—I never saw Kathleen take quite such pains to be disagreeable to any man—and that means a great deal."

"Does it?" queried the young man humbly. "I confess that I should never have dreamed it. If she really loved one, I suppose she'd cut him dead. Curious! I dare say I haven't read enough novels," he added. "But, joking aside, since Mrs. Birdsong isn't here, I should like to see Miss Fletcher and to make my adieus to her."

"You are going away?"

"Yes; back to New York."

Gerald had a fatuous pride in the air of ease with which he said the words; it would show this cocksure young woman that he didn't wear his heart absolutely on his sleeve for clever newspaper writers to peck at. And when Kathleen heard the sad news of his intended departure, perhaps she would be moved to give some sign of feeling. He was convinced for the moment that there must be, in her heart, some of the emotion which he so deeply desired to have there.

But Miss Rowley, with a shake of the head, said:



"I reserved her section this morning," said Theresa, rising and looking among the papers on the desk for a memorandum.

"Too bad! If you were only headed the other way now——"

"The other way?"

"Yes; toward the coast. Toward San Francisco. Kathleen is bound out there next week, and I don't believe you'll have much chance to see her before she starts. She's gone to Pueblo for a visit, and she'll be back only in time to pack."

"But I thought she was a working woman," protested the aggrieved Mr. Cromartin. "I thought she taught things in a school here. How can she go sky-larking all over the country in term time, I should like to know? Shocking poor discipline, I call it."

"Measles did it. The school is closed for the term—closed until after the Easter holidays because of an epidemic of measles. And by that time she'll be back from San Francisco. I suppose it was some queer whim of her father's that she should not come into her property—the whole of it—until she was twenty-five, and that she should return to San Francisco to sign up the final papers and things. There's some pica-

yune mystery about it—he loved mysteries!"

"San Francisco is, of course, a place which no foreign visitor to your shores should miss seeing," remarked Mr. Cromartin reflectively.

"They're awfully stuck on themselves out there," replied the lady elegantly and somewhat jealously. "But San Francisco doesn't hold a candle to Denver—poor, foggy, imitation New York!"

"Don't draw me into your interurban rows, please," begged Gerald. "Especially

as you yourself first suggested the idea of personal benefit to me from a trip to the coast, opportunely timed."

"Oh, you mean about Kathie?" Miss Rowley came out of the interurban reflections into which she had been plunged by Gerald's suggestion. "It might—and then again it might not. She's an awfully difficult person to prophesy about, is Kathleen Fletcher. I know. I've lived with her three years, and I have a speaking acquaintance with most of her moods and tempers. But every now and then she springs a perfectly new and hitherto unsuspected one upon me. But with all her crochets, I love her dearly."

"And with all her crochets, I love her dearly." Gerald repeated the words.

Miss Rowley was not sure whether he used the interrogative accent of a man seeking to verify his impression of her speech, or the affirmative intonation of a man stating his own position. She looked at him with raised eyebrows, but he declined to enlighten her by even a glance.

"She has the most amazing collection of friends and dependents," pursued the girl after a second's pause. "This flat has been the refuge for more kinds of misery—and for more kinds of folly, if you come to that. Limping dogs and awful, mangy cats—any old thing which the conditions of life have knocked out of the running—Russian spies, who would be eating our bread and drinking our coffee yet if I didn't happen to have an attack of sense every once in a while. Fenians, drunken Irish servant girls—whether because they're drunk or Irish, I have never quite made up my mind. Anarchists—lunatics! Oh, we lead a variegated existence when Kathleen is feeling in prime condition."

Gerald looked at Theresa Rowley with great kindness of expression. Theresa sighed, and resumed her panegyric—if panegyric it could be called.

"That's why I'd give something pretty to see her married to a nice, cheerful, commonplace person. I beg your pardon!" she added, reddening.

"Not at all. I hope I'm nice and cheerful; and I'm profoundly aware of my commonplaceness."

"Of course, it's not really commonplace that I mean," murmured the abashed young lady. "I only mean normal, not morbid—not even in one's virtues. You understand, don't you? She's kind to morbidness—that's one of her traits. She's loyal to morbidness. It was her adored father, who must have been an impossible human being if ever one existed, who bequeathed her half the crazy causes and half the crazy friends to which or to whom she is devoted. I mean by commonplace only not morbid. Do you understand?"

"Completely. Please don't imagine you have hurt my feelings. And it's because you think she needs a—guardian, companion—what shall I call it?—who lacks her capacity for quixotism that you have some inclinations toward me as a possible suitor for her?"

Miss Rowley nodded.

"I'd hate it horribly, in one way, to have her marry and go away from this country. There's no other country so

good," she added defiantly; but he did not take the challenge up, and merely smiled. "But if she marries a foreigner, she'll be taken away from the queer causes she's championed, the queer dependents she's collected. And Europe and America aren't so very far apart."

"The Irish coast is especially near," he told her. She smiled, and then he went on: "I suppose you couldn't give me an idea of the exact date at which Miss Fletcher is going to start for the coast?"

"It wouldn't be fair," demurred the girl. "Besides, she'd kill me outright, if she knew it."

"It would be perfectly fair, and she would never know that you had told. Besides, I'm not going to San Francisco. I have no business there; and, after all, I'm here primarily on business. But I'd like to send something—roses or something—to the train."

"I reserved her section this morning," said Theresa, rising and looking among the papers on the desk for a memorandum. "The nine-o'clock train Thursday night—section eleven, car *Queen Liliuokalani*, Union Station. Now, for pity's sake, don't go back on me and take that train! She'd kill me—and it would finish you with her!"

"I'm leaving for New York in two days, honestly," answered Gerald, with conviction. And then he took his leave of the amiably garrulous friend of Kathleen.

On his way back to his hotel, he engaged his transportation East. However much he wished to see Kathleen and to be her companion on her journey, he had still some idea of his own dignity, and, furthermore, of the requirements of courtesy. He couldn't pursue a woman regardless of her clearly expressed wishes. He couldn't try to woo a girl who had given unmistakable evidences of a romantic interest in another man. Unworthily as she had bestowed her affections, still it was not for him, a rejected wooer, to try to prevent her from having her own way with her own romance.

But the best resolutions are, after all, at the mercy of chance. Two days later,

packed and ruefully ready to begin his journey, he received a telegram from Hamidge & Jay, in reply to his own announcing the fruitlessness of his expedition to the West, and his consequent immediate return. It ran:

Better wait in Denver until letter following has been received.

For two days he cooled his heels about the hotel, and then the letter arrived. It was written in a mingling of Hamidge & Jay's most punctilious legal manner and Mr. Hamidge's friendly style, and it acquainted Mr. Cromartin with the fact that Peter Sheridan was reported to have been seen on the streets of San Francisco about seven years before. The merest accident had revealed the circumstance to Mr. Hamidge. A casual, new-met acquaintance, lunching at the same club, was moved to talk of the men whose respectable families found it less embarrassing to have them live in the waste places of the earth than at home, and added that he himself had known several such.

"Why, half a dozen of the fellows I myself knew at school and at the university—I'm a Dublin man, you know, Mr. Hamidge—have disappeared from their own places and their own circles, and are supposed to be maintained in the wilderness somewhere. I often wonder with what sort of compunction or remorse their relatives are visited when the news of their death finally comes."

Thus Mr. Hamidge detailed the beginning of the conversation. And he, as he reported to Gerald, had replied:

"News of their death is not always properly authenticated. Estates are often held up by the neglect of the black sheep to communicate the sad tidings to their families. We have one such case in our office now. A young Irishman, who came here as a remittance man twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago, is giving us all sorts of trouble by not announcing his death, if he has died, or his continued existence, if he's alive. The Sheridans thought that he gave them trouble enough in his active day; but he's more bother in his quiescence."

"The Sheridans? Was it Peter Sheri-

dan?" Mr. Hamidge's new acquaintance had inquired.

And then it had come out that Peter had been a classmate of his at Dublin University; and, more important still, that he had met and talked with Peter on the streets of San Francisco seven years previously.

Mr. Hamidge then wrote:

I give you the statements for what they are worth. Mr. O'Dowd says that he met Peter Sheridan, but admits that he was not intimately acquainted with him, and that there was nothing in their sidewalk conversation to impress the occurrence deeply upon his mind. So that it may have been some one of the other wandering friends of his youth. However, he claims to be sure that it was Peter Sheridan, and he also claims to remember that Peter Sheridan told him that he was living and working in San Francisco. But Sheridan did not disclose the place of his abode or the nature of his occupation. Something which he let fall impressed Mr. O'Dowd as indicating that he might be going under another name than his own, but of this detail his memory is admittedly hazy. Sheridan—if it was indeed he—was dressed passably well, from which O'Dowd infers that his employment was not manual. That is about all there is to the clew. A man for whom I cannot vouch in any way claims to have seen Peter Sheridan on the streets of San Francisco seven years ago. And yet you, in your enthusiasm, my dear Cromartin, may feel that it is worth while to follow up the lead.

Mr. Cromartin, ejaculating piously: "God is good!" hastened to engage a section upon the train leaving Denver for San Francisco at nine o'clock on Thursday evening.

"I'll see her at breakfast!" he told himself elatedly. "I wonder at what time she will breakfast, by the way? Never mind. I can fix that up with the porter."

He arose at seven on the first morning out of Denver in order to be sure not to miss Kathleen in case she proved one of those healthy dawn-and-oatmeal-and-milk young women. The well-tipped porter, wearing a broad grin, which rather nullified the conspirator air of mystery with which he was otherwise adorned, made many excursions between Mr. Cromartin's Pullman, the *King Kalakana*, and the one in which Miss Fletcher was riding.

At ten o'clock, when Gerald was despairingly prepared to obey the last call for breakfast, and was tormenting himself with anxieties concerning Kathleen's appetiteless health, his ebon messenger came ruefully back from a tenth or twelfth reconnoitering expedition, and reported that the young lady was preparing her own meal.

"She's done took er norange outen a little basket like what she's got, an' squeezed the juice inter a cup," he explained; "an' she's made herself some tea with one of them little spirit lamps, an' she's had her pohtah fasten in the table, an' she's a-eatin' right there, as cozy as anything."

The famished Mr. Cromartin, muttering something profane, dashed to the diner, and proceeded to devour a substantial meal. Fortified thereby, he nerved himself to stroll in a casual manner through the coaches, and tried to practice upon his astonished waiter the glance of surprise with which he would encounter the unexpected vision of Kathleen Fletcher in section eleven of the regally named sleeping car.

He had no need to practice, for his



In a lightning flash of time, a kaleidoscopic vision of his life rolled rapidly before him

astonishment was quite genuine at Kathleen's greeting when he advanced toward the seat from which she watched the rapidly whirling landscape. She turned from the window as he paused beside her with the beginning of an ejaculation on his lips. Her color rose, and her gray eyes deepened, and she cried breathlessly:

"Oh! And after you had promised not to!"

"Promised not to what?" murmured the young man weakly.

She scorched and seared him with her scornful look.

"After you had solemnly promised Theresa Rowley that you wouldn't take

any advantage of the information she had given you!"

"Who—may I sit here for a second? Your attack has weakened me. I may? Thank you. Who told you anything about any information which that attractive and friendly young lady was good enough to give me?"

"Who told me?"

Kathleen laughed, a laugh of pure merriment. It was a delicious, bubbling sound, and it occurred to him that he had not heard it before. Even if she was laughing at him, as seemed very likely, it was a delightful noise, and he hoped that it might continue.

"Who told me?" she repeated when the peal had ceased. "Theresa Rowley, of course. You didn't imagine that it was only toward you that she manifested such indiscretion as to tell—all she knew, and a good deal besides? I hadn't been home from Pueblo two hours before she had told me every syllable that you two interchanged during your visit."

The laughter at his look of discomfiture died out of her face, and it was again the grave, inscrutable, rebellious one that he had known from the first.

"Of course, I ought to have been prepared for this," said Gerald. "I ought to have remembered that I was talking to a newspaper woman with an insatiable passion for publishing all that she hears. Are you sure, by the way, that you didn't read the whole conversation in whichever paper Miss Rowley writes for? No? That was good of her!"

"But you promised her—and she believed you, or I should not have taken this train—that you would not make this use of the information she gave you. You promised that you wouldn't—persecute me."

"I am sorry it looks like persecution to you," said the young man. He had grown a little pale, and his usual debonaire air of finding the situation half a joke was gone from him. "Possibly I ought not to have taken this train. But it is the truth that I had engaged my return to New York after I saw Miss Rowley, and that only a telegram from

my firm prevented my leaving Denver for the East five days ago. The telegram held me there, the letter that followed sent me to San Francisco, and the only detail in which my own choice was the guide was the train upon which I should travel. But, since my being here looks to you like persecution, I promise you that you shall not see me again during the journey. Or ever after," he added, by way of an agreeable finale to his speech.

He arose as he spoke, and the girl, looking at him with an uncertain glance, half put out her hand to stay him. On her finger flashed the ruby ring.

"Oh!" he cried, startled out of his renunciatory dignity. "It has come, then?"

Kathleen followed his glance. She flushed deeply.

"Come? You mean that my ring has been found? Yes."

"Yes, that was what I meant," repeated Gerald. He looked at her longingly. "Good-by," he said. "Please say good-by to me kindly. I am, as they say on the stage, going out of your life forever."

The mobile face at which he gazed longingly changed again; there was a dimple at the corner of Kathleen's mouth, and Gerald realized that he had never seen it before.

"Why," she asked, and the dimple deepened, although her gray eyes were averted from him, "why go out of my life forever until we reach San Francisco?"

"Do you know," replied Gerald, keeping his self-possession with difficulty before this amazing change of front, and promptly dropping into the vacant seat beside her, "that you remind me in the most unexpected manner of some one of whom I never supposed you could remind me?"

"And who is that?" asked the girl, smiling as she looked at him.

"Her name is Nora Braisted," Gerald answered. "She is a very charming and accomplished flirt."

"Oh!" cried Kathleen indignantly. "If that is the way you take it, because I accept your apologies——"

"I take it, my dear lady, as a condemned murderer takes a reprieve—with enormous gratitude, and with an irrepressible gush of hope. But I cannot help it if, for the first time in our spasmodic intercourse, your manner of bestowing a great favor reminds me of my lovely client."

"Is she," inquired Kathleen demurely, "at all the type of Mrs. La Shelle?" Gerald threw back his head and laughed.

"If Lady Nora could but see Mrs. La Shelle, and then hear that suggestion! No, she is not in the least the type of Mrs. La Shelle. She is—why, now that I think of it deliberately and carefully—she is much more your own type. In looks, I mean. No—I am not sure. Perhaps it was just the way in which you accorded me permission to live until we reached San Francisco. Or the dimple. Forgive me," he added, as she blushed and looked a trifle offended; "I did not mean to comment like this. And I'm profoundly thankful to you, my lady of whims."

When he left her an hour or two later, his head was in a whirl. He sought the smoker, and tried to puff himself into a calm state of mind and nerves. How was it possible for one small woman to be so many kinds of a person? He recalled the mystic of the first morning out upon the Atlantic, wrapped in gray fog, yearning after some form of communion with her lost father. He thought of the stern and uncompromising young person who had been the ally of the unspeakable Jaffreys, and who had snubbed Mrs. La Shelle and himself so roundly. He thought of the sad-eyed, mothering girl who looked so pitifully and yet so commandingly at the misguided souls at that insane anarchist meeting which had captured him in Paterson. He thought of the girl of the Kentucky homestead—and then he caught his breath sharply.

Fool! He was nourishing himself on dreams and delusions. He had forgotten Gilroy, and the unmistakable proof he had had of Kathleen's deep affection there. What good to go on with his memories of her in many guises—the

merry granddaughter of the little party in the Denver apartment, the coquette who had somehow reminded him, a few moments ago, of Nora Braisted, that past mistress of coquetry? In none of her guises was she for him. Something to while away the tedium of this long trip he was to her—and that was all. That was the end. Well, he would do his best to serve that humble purpose in her life.

In the day that followed, she told him, with unexpected frankness, the object of her journey. It was to obey a last injunction of her father.

"Poor father had little enough to leave me," she said; "but what he had, he tied up until I should be twenty-five. He was convinced that no woman is capable of forming any kind of a judgment before that age; and it seems that my poor little inheritance is hedged about with all sorts of conditions and decisions. He wanted me to come back here, to San Francisco. I mean where we had lived together and had been so queer and so happy—we understood each other, my father and I!—because he wanted it to be there, with the old influences upon me, that I should make the decisions which would be necessary. His lawyer there, Mr. Cortiszez, has all the papers, and there is to be quite a powwow over me and my little tupenny fortune on my birthday. That will be next week. Meantime, I am going to visit a woman I know out there who wants to see me—and whom I want to see. You," she added defiantly, "wouldn't approve of her or of my visiting her in the very least. She once lived—lived—" Her defiance faltered. She whipped it into line and went on. "She once lived with the man she loved—out of wedlock!" With eager eyes she dared him to reprove her.

"My little Donna Quixota!" he said.

"But you would have refused me permission to go and see her, if yours was the right to give me permissions and to withhold them—wouldn't you?"

"There isn't a question about my using every power of persuasion in the world to try to induce you not to visit her. By the way," he interrupted him-



She raised her face, pale, spent, infinitely tragic, to his.

self to ask sharply, "she isn't still living with this man you speak of?"

"No. He died." Gerald breathed a sigh of relief.

"Tell me," said Gerald, looking at her attentively, "is the lady your friend solely because she defied conventions? Or did you forgive her defiance of the conventions because she was already your friend?"

The girl looked out of the window with grave, sweet, pondering eyes. Finally she turned upon him the glance which always thrilled him most deeply with the sense of her dearness—the glance of gravity, truth, and wonder.

"I am not sure." She answered his question. "You see, I had been trained in a strange school for a young girl, and something in me was always revolting against the teaching, and something else revolting against the revolt. Do you understand?"

"The battle between instinct and reason," he replied. "But how were you

trained in a strange school? Mrs. Birdsong seemed to me to be a most cheerful blossoming of the normal and the commonplace in her views."

"Grandmother? Oh, yes—the dear! But my father was different. When I came to live with him, it was not the way it had been. I—I almost adored him. But his ways were not grandmother's. His teachings were not grandmother's. The freedom of the human being, the loosing of all shackles, those of custom as well as those of injustice; that was what he talked, and thought, and looked toward. And the vices that are practiced in the guise of virtue, under the cloak of custom—how he could talk of those! And—after my mother died, and I had gone to Bluevale, to grandmother—ah, I don't know why I tell you!" Her eyes were suddenly swimming in tears.

"Because it relieves your heart to. Because you know that I understand. That is why," he told her softly.

"It nearly broke my heart when I first learned it," she went on with the story. "But he talked to me so wisely and so well, and she—she was not—common, you know."

"Who?"

"After my mother had been dead some years, he—contracted an alliance with Ned Gilroy's mother. They did not marry; they did not believe in it, you see. And besides, she couldn't really tell whether she was already bound. Oh, I am muddling it so! She had married a man named Gilroy—a man who went by the name of Gilroy. And he abused her frightfully; and in the end, before he left her, he made her doubt whether she had really been legally married to him or not, or whether his name was Gilroy. It seems it was sometimes Gresham he was called. But he deserted her and Ned when Ned was a little, unruly bit of a chap. And so she was at war with society, like my poor father. And so—" Her voice fell sadly into silence, and he looked at her with a great longing to gather her into his arms, and protect her from all the harshness and unloveliness in the world. "And so, when I came to join him, I soon heard—and—you can see—can you not?—how hard it would be for me now to tell you why I countenanced unconventionalities in people."

"And so you have known Ned Gilroy since you first came out to your father?"

Gerald did not know what dim hope was struggling to life in his heart; only he was beginning to realize that in the girl beside him there were capacities for all sorts of kindly, affectionate, loyal relationships, and that because she was generous, self-sacrificing, or tender on behalf of any man did not necessarily imply that it was as a lover that she regarded that man. And with that realization his sky grew rosy.

"Yes," she said. "Poor Ned! How he hated my father—and his own! I have always felt as if he were crippled through and through—not merely in his body. And I always felt, too, as though I—I myself—owed him something. If my father's talk and ideas had not permeated Mrs. Gilroy's mind, you see she

might have settled down into something quite simple, and orderly, and law-abiding after her husband deserted her. And then Ned might have been different. You see?"

"I see," said Mr. Cromartin devoutly, "that you are an angel."

After the wonderful revelations of the trip, the wonderful progress toward intimacy which he felt that he had made with Kathleen, it enraged and disheartened Gerald to find, on reaching San Francisco, that she really expected him to bid her the final good-by he had made in such solemn manner on the train. His astonishment when she declined to give him the address of the friend with whom she was to stay was very wrathful. He flung himself off in a huff, and was driven to his hotel, swearing that he would never again wear his heart upon his sleeve, or in any other way put himself at a disadvantage with a woman.

He persisted, to himself, that he remained of the same mind during the meaningless days that followed, when San Francisco refused to yield him any more trace of Peter Sheridan than it would have yielded of Cæsar. Mr. Hamidge's letters to his firm of correspondent lawyers, their recommendations in regard to detectives, the memories of the oldest and most garrulous Fenians, socialists, Clan-na-gael men—all things proved fruitless.

And Gerald steadfastly refused to admit to himself that he was not half so much interested in the success or failure of these efforts of his as he was in his inability to come upon Kathleen Fletcher. His eyes were always roving in search of her; he gave but half an ear to the reports of his agents or the anecdotes of his hosts—for the thoughtful Mr. Hamidge had supplied him liberally with requisitions upon the hospitable city's hospitality—because he was always listening for the sweet, surprising charm of her infrequent laughter.

And then came the great, the horrible experience of his life. He was sound asleep, and slumber was playing him

that most niggardly of all its tricks—it was filling his dreams with memories of things in which he had long ago lost interest—a game of polo at home, with Nora Braisted and some earlier flame still looking on at it; a discussion with his father concerning the relative harmfulness of pipes and cigarettes.

And from this futile, vaporous lot of recollections, he awoke suddenly to find the room heaving about him, and a cloud of dust arising from its fallen ceiling through a great gash in which he caught sight of the protruding leg of a bed in the room above. Shrieks sounded through the same aperture, and the suffocating powder from the fallen plaster filled his nostrils.

For a second, he was paralyzed; and then, as the sounds of terror from above conveyed the impression of earthquake to his mind, he had his moment of cold, clammy fear. In that instant, he was but a human animal gripped by the awful expectation of immediate extinguishment. In a lightning flash of time, a kaleidoscopic vision of his life rolled rapidly before him. It passed, and with it the abject cowardice of the single second. He remembered Kathleen.

It was the work of seconds only, though they seemed endless to him, to slip into some clothing and to jam into his pocket a bundle of letters and papers. His windows had given upon a fire-escape balcony, he recalled. Across the crazy floor he caromed, to find the iron trellis and ladders twisted and torn from the face of the building. He made his slippery way back to his bathroom, and looked forth from its window. There was no fire escape on that side; but a coil of rope lay in the middle of the broken porcelain tub, cast there from beneath the window. There was a cold sweat upon his forehead as he took the time to make the rope fast to the one pipe left standing in the room. What if another shock should come before he had slid down to the awful, up-torn street waiting below him in the dawn? What if—but where was Kathleen? That was the real question.

The perilous descent was over. He stood upon the street surrounded by

hundreds of jabbering idiots, who could not tell him where to find her, who could not tell him how widespread had been the shock, who could not tell him anything except their own silly experiences with sliding beds or rising bureaus, or their own panic over their families.

All through the indescribable horrors of the day he went, seeking her. To the ruin wrought by earthquake, fire added its tremendous, crushing weight of calamity. All about him were terror, misery, desolation. Money was powerless to aid him in his search; and continually his frantic, aimless quest was stopped by some insistent sight of anguish that demanded immediate relief.

And as he sought her feverishly, persistently, doggedly, purposely, his pity and his sympathy were challenged time and time again. He dared not pass by a single sorrow that he could alleviate; for was it not possible that somewhere—somewhere in this dreadful city of doom, she was suffering like this one or like that, with none to help her? He must propitiate Heaven in her behalf by kindness to those who suffered as perchance she was suffering.

He put himself in danger of arrest, overriding, as he did, official regulations in his quest of Kathleen. And finally he was corralled into a relief corps. It was the second day of the chaos, the desolation; and he was rather glad finally to be directed, controlled in his activities. He would be no farther from her than he had been, no farther from the possibility of finding her.

It was in the camp of refugees at the Presidio that he finally came upon her. The heavenly sound of her voice broke upon his ears as he went his rounds upon a dreary assignment of apportioning inadequate bedding among the homeless, the old, the sick women with little children, women in travail—it was terrible, heartrending, unbelievable! But her voice fell upon his distraught spirit like dew upon hot eyelids. He looked where the sound guided. She knelt by a young mother who had lost her baby; and her words, her voice were all sweetness, all succor.

"Kathleen!" he cried, looking upon her as she knelt, disheveled, overborne with weariness, with exertion, as upon a saint. "Kathleen!"

At the sound of his voice, her sheltering arms relaxed from the young mother's form. She raised her face, pale, spent, infinitely tragic, to his. A light sprang to her eyes.

"Safe!" she cried. "Safe! Oh, you are safe! Thank God! Thank God!"

He caught her in his arms as her tired body fell backward in the faint of utter exhaustion. His search was ended. He had found his love—his own love, as the look upon her welcoming face, the cry of her glad heart had told him. He had found her, he had found love, he had found—he told himself so, as in a moment of recollection, he dis-

missed forever from his mind all the trifles of his past—he had found manhood at last. And as he held her, he kissed her unconscious face with a kiss that was a sacrament. And the young mother stayed her bitter wailing long enough to bless them.

"Tell me again, my darling, that you love me," he commanded.

He gazed with jealous, adoring possession at her face, which, to tell the truth, was somewhat dirty.

"I do, I do!" she told him fervently.

"But it took an earthquake and the destruction of a city to induce you to mention it. Dearest, wrap this blanket closer about you. You are so fagged, so used up, you'll be taking a chill and growing ill—just when I've found you.



"They'll never believe I didn't know—never! They'll say I was a common fortune hunter."

But it did take calmity to make you admit that you loved me, didn't it?"

"Ah, I would not admit it even to myself until—until I thought you might be lying dead somewhere! Then I knew. I knew that it was real, that it was true. Before that I had kept telling myself that it was not real, that I could soon get over it, that it was better for me to get over it. You were so different, you see—so light-hearted, so—oh, so well fed, and self-sufficient, and joyful. You didn't seem to need me. I didn't think you could care for the things I care most about."

He drew her closer to him.

"I need you more than any of your cripples, than any of your cranks, my dear little Donna Quixota."

"You've called me that before."

"I'm not clever. I can't invent a new name for each time I speak to you. Only one new name—and it is to be the old, the long, the lasting one. Guess what it is."

She smiled at him silently, and did not answer.

"It is the name I shall call you when you are a dear old lady moving in your garden at sunset, snipping the dead leaves from your flowers, and when I am a doddering old man, pottering around after you. Sweetheart, you will grow so weary of me always pottering after you."

"It is not that I am afraid of," she told him. "Oh, Gerald, you will always love me, won't you? I should be so lonely away off, over there, if you ever stopped loving me!"

He kissed her fingers.

"My wife!" he said; and she asked no other promise of lifelong loyalty than the look he turned upon her.

They were of age, they were, it seemed to them, as much alone in the world as if they were the first man and the first woman. All around them lovers were marrying as fast as officials could be found for joining men and women in wedlock. In the utterly, terribly new universe which the destruction of the old had made, old plans were thrown aside, old dignities abandoned. To be together, to labor together, to face danger, hardship together, to enter the new life together—these were the important things, not trousseaus, not wedding marches and point lace.

"You will marry me at once?" he asked her, and she assented with a pale face and grave, sad, joyful eyes.

It was done as soon as the over-worked clerk in the Oakland office—for, like half the survivors of the disaster, they were across the bay in the little suburban city now—could give them the necessary papers, and an over-worked priest could give the sanction of the church to the documents.

She contrived to look like a bride. He had been one of the fortunate men who had possessed actual money and

not merely bank accounts and letters of credit when the earthquake came; and, though she was nearly penniless, she borrowed a fabulous sum from him for a white serge suit and a white blouse which an Oakland shop sold her and an Oakland dressmaker fitted to her slight figure. A white chiffon veil covered the hard outlines of the sailor hat, which was the only headgear she was able to compass. But she looked divinely bride-like to her husband as they left the rectory and walked down the street.

"Perhaps," she told him, smiling, "if I ever find Mr. Cortiszez, and if he still has my poor little inheritance, and it hasn't been burned up, I may be able to pay you for my wedding finery. Why, Gerald, there he is!"

A small, dark, nervous-looking man was walking briskly toward them. At sight of Kathleen, he gave an exclamation.

"My dear Miss Kathie, my dear girl, but this is a relief. We have been distracted about you. You didn't tell me where you were staying the day you called me up—the very day before the fire. And Mrs. Cortiszez has been wild over you. Yes—yes, thank God, all safe, all over here now. And the office force! Kathie, my dear, never tell me that ordinary American men aren't heroes. Every paper saved! Buried—oh, they worked like beavers! But I am running on. Will you present me to this gentleman?"

"He—Mr. Cortiszez, Mr. Cromartin," faltered Kathleen.

Gerald laughed as he shook the lawyer's hand.

"And may I present you to Mrs. Cromartin, Mr. Cortiszez?" he said. "She's been that only ten minutes or so, and therefore I forgive her for ignoring the fact."

"God bless my soul!" cried Mr. Cortiszez, shaking both their hands with great vigor. "God bless my soul! But this is a pleasure. I'm glad you're caught, caged at last, Kathie, my dear. No more work at teaching school. No more work as a treasury agent, spying in Paris shops upon suspected American smugglers. I hear the La Shelles

got ahead of you, my dear. How? Oh, she's told every one. A husband to keep you in order—no more of your father's wild friends imposing on you. Well, well! I'm glad you're married. And I suppose you'd like to have a session with me to get your hands upon what your poor father left you? It isn't so much; but it will help to set up house-keeping. And—if you've the notion to take the name he gave up—there, I forgot you've just taken one of your own! Well, anyway, if you choose to claim the family he cast off for good and all when he came to this country, there might some day be a penny or two for you on the other side of the water. But more likely not. The Sheridans, he told me, were always out at the elbows, and were record breakers in the progeny-producing line. I guess there'd be little for you at that end."

"Sheridan? Sheridan?" It was Gerald who interrupted the garrulous little man. "Sheridan? Tell me—is my wife the daughter of Peter Sheridan?"

"Of the very same, as you'll see in three minutes—here we are at my temporary office. Though he had his name changed by act of legislature—Why, what's the matter, man?"

"They'll think," said Gerald, sitting heavily down upon a rustic bench outside the cottage transformed into a law office; "they'll think I did it deliberately. They'll never believe I didn't know—never! They'll say I was a common fortune hunter."

"Gerald, are you mad?" demanded Kathleen.

"Lots of them have gone crazy from shock," commented Mr. Cortiszez; "but it's generally only temporary."

"A common fortune hunter, that's what they'll call me," persisted Mr. Cromartin. "Kathleen, if you want it annulled, our marriage, when you find out what an heiress you are, I swear I won't put the tiniest splinter of a stumbling block in your way. I really hate to think what Sir Charles will call me."

"Come in," said Kathleen to the lawyer. "Bring him in, and let us find out what he means."

They did call him a fortune hunter when he reappeared in Dublin with the heir of Peter Sheridan's estates, in most expensive traveling garb, upon his arm. Even his father, meeting him at the station and congratulating him with great warmth, infused some admiration of his astuteness into the congratulations.

"You'll be grieved to hear that Peter Sheridan's heir purposes to divide all of the unentailed portion of the property with those whom her discovery has discomfited," Gerald remarked.


The elder Mr. Cromartin's rosy, smiling face grew long.

"And you are going to allow such a piece of—of quixotism?" he asked. Gerald's smile deepened.

"We were married in the States, you see," he explained, "where, whenever a bride permits the 'obey' to be used in the marriage service, it is with the tacit agreement that it shall be regarded as an amusing piece of archaic humor."

"It is not alone in the States that that tacit agreement exists," declared the elder gentleman with heartfelt conviction. "Your cousin Nora, my dear"—he turned beamingly toward his daughter-in-law—"your cousin Nora never heard the word obey in the marriage service. She's leading her husband a pretty dance these days. Gerald, my boy, I'd give a five-pound note, rare as they are with me, to see his face when the news is broken to him. Whether he'll be more furious to learn that his wife is cut out of a fortune, or more relieved to find you safely married, tied up, and out of harm's way—"

Gerald looked anxiously at his wife; but in her gray eyes were understanding and perfect trust. Again the sense of eternal sanctities flooded his heart, the glow of full-grown manhood and high resolutions. And, helping her from the car before his father's door, he kissed her fingers as a vassal might his liege lady's. Follies and flirtations, fortunes and the gossip on men's tongues—all things fell to their proper, subordinate places. Love and nobility, reverence, gratitude, and happiness went up the steps with him, and crossed the threshold of his home.



What the Editor Has to Say

WE have known people, perhaps you have, too, who seemed to be proud of the fact that they did not read fiction. To such, "light literature," as they call it, makes no appeal. They want something "solid" and serious, a book of biography, a history, a volume of sermons, anything pretentious and imposing. Be assured that such an attitude is the hallmark of a conventional and superficial mind. There is nothing in the whole history of literature to justify it. If we look back, we see that almost all the great and permanent books have been fiction. The books that don't last, that are forgotten, are the nonfiction books.

WHEN Shakespeare wrote "Hamlet," he was writing for people who loved fiction, whether presented between the covers of a book or on the stage. Can you recall any other book of the same period as well known? Lord Bacon was the greatest highbrow of that time, and he wrote a great many books. You don't see many people reading them now, they are not called for much in the public libraries, they don't sell very well in the bookstores. But the plays—works of fiction—are selling better and better every year.

SOMETHING over a century ago, Gibbon wrote "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." It was the work of a lifetime, and was hailed as one of the most important literary happenings of the century. To-day the

historical student who reads Gibbon does so only because of its literary style. There are other, better, more authoritative histories. We know more about the ancient Romans and the causes that contributed to the fall of their empire than Gibbon did. At about the same time a rather obscure fox-hunting Englishman named Fielding wrote "Tom Jones," the first of a long line of great English novels. Now, when Gibbon's great history is obsolete and antiquated, when it seems hopelessly foreign to our time and generation in viewpoint, "Tom Jones" is as fresh and interesting as ever.

AFTER all, we know England through Dickens, and Thackeray, and Jane Austen, and George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy, and a dozen others. Sir Walter Scott did a more real service to his country than all the serious Scotch divines with all their serious sermons. The philosophical and scientific books written in Germany about a century ago are rather musty and dusty by this time, but Goethe's "Faust" is just as great a drama as ever and just as interesting. Victor Hugo and Balzac mean more to us now, and really make more difference to us in influencing our point of view and philosophy of life, than all the statesmen and diplomats of their generation. Ten or fifteen years ago, it would have surprised a good many people in Norway to be told that a certain playwright, Ibsen, was the biggest and most important force their country had pro-

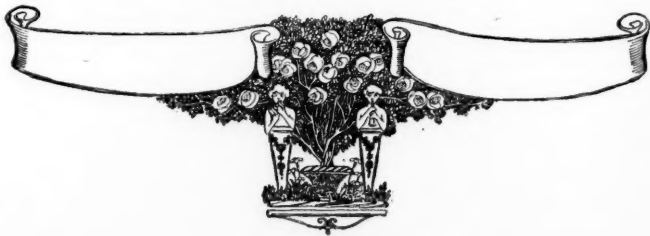
duced in half a century, but to-day there are tens of thousands of people all over the world whose only interest in Norway lies in the fact that Ibsen lived there and drew on its life for the scenes and characters of his dramas.

THE reason for the fact that stories endure and have permanence above all other literary creations is not hard to find. Fiction deals with the things that are really the most permanent and changeless of anything in the world—human nature and character. Fashions change, beliefs change, governments pass, totter, and fall, and are replaced by others, wealth becomes poverty, poverty becomes wealth, business supremacy, military supremacy, wealth, and art pass from one hand to another. To-day Greece is just a monument to a half-forgotten past, as England will be some day. Burning questions that agitate whole generations of men fade and are forgotten. Where once were mountain tops is now the sea, the oceans of another day are now our sandy deserts. Every page of history, every day of experience teaches the lesson of change and mutability in all things save one—human nature.

HUMAN nature and character, in their strength and weakness, their meanness, their nobility, change little, if at all. As Kipling says, "We are very slightly changed from the semiapes that ranged India's prehistoric clay." The writer who is able to portray character for us is informing us on the subject that is, after all, the most important in

the world. You can't read a really good novel without learning something new about yourself and other people. No really great work of fiction can fail to do incalculable good in influencing people to set up higher standards of conduct and performance. The writers of fiction, not the muckrakers or reformers, are the real ethical leaders and teachers. In the New Testament the greatest lessons of all are not laid down as cold philosophical propositions, but are woven into the fabric of parables.

IF you like to read fiction, you are fond of human nature, and are interested in it. If you read a great deal, you are gratifying unconsciously a worthy, a natural desire for a wisdom that cannot be taught in textbooks. In a good novel you are getting the quintessence of the writer's experience of life and human nature. We think that "The Fighting Doctor," which starts in the present issue of the magazine, gives a better picture of life in a certain rural community to-day than you could possibly obtain outside the pages of a book of fiction. We think that "The Tinsel Queen," by Nalbro Bartley, which will appear as a complete novel in the next issue, is better than any critical essay, for the people it makes you acquainted with, the incidents it describes, are taken direct from life itself and not at secondhand from books. The only trash, the only worthless fiction, is that which is deliberately or unconsciously false in its presentation of human nature and life. All other, so long as it is sound and interesting, is well worth while.



Health and Beauty of the Eyes, Brows, and Lashes

By Dr. Lillian Whitney

MAN'S stupidity and ignorance in the use of his body are a source of never-ending despair to physicians; especially is this true of the treatment accorded the eyes, the mechanism of which is so marvelous that the keenest human intelligence is unable to reproduce it. The eyes are really a prolongation of the brain, or, as a noted eye specialist aptly remarked: "The brain comes out to see." Every moment of our waking life the eye is taking impressions, which are photographed upon the brain for instant or future need.

One of the many penalties of the overcharged lives most of us are leading in this strenuous age, is the breaking down of the organs of sight in consequence of the terrible strain to which they are constantly subjected. Civilization brings on ills that were unknown in primitive days. For instance, artificial light, especially the glare of electric light, is disastrous to the eye. The speed with which objects rush by in trains, motor cars, and the like, and upon which we endeavor to focus our vision, is a frightful strain upon the highly sensitive nerves.

The savage, the laborer in the field, or those occupied out of doors, do not suffer from eye strain because they live close to nature, and do not abuse their organs of sight in the thousand and one ways of the city dweller.

Women are particularly heedless in this respect. They sew or read in a fading light; they shop for hours with a veil drawn over their eyes, through which they wrinkle their brows and eyelids in an effort to reënforce what vision they possess in order to discern the bedimmed objects upon which they are

gazing; they do all this and much more, and ultimately reap the punishment in tired, weary-looking, lackluster eyes, crumpled, dark eyelids, surrounded by myriads of wrinkles.

Because "the brain comes out to see," the eyes reflect every thought, every emotion; they are the "windows of the soul"; and, because of the greater tenderness and patience of women, their eyes are usually softer and gentler than those of men; also, as women are more emotional, their eyes are infinitely more expressive.

Much can be done with a little daily care to restore the natural beauty of these wonderful organs. Eyes that are small, deeply sunken in the orbits, worn out from excessive eye strain, et cetera, et cetera, are greatly benefited by gymnastics of the eyeballs. The eyes lie upon a bed of fat, and are held in position by little muscles. Exercising these muscles strengthens them; while rolling the eyes about in their orbits develops the surrounding tissue.

Hold the eyes in a forward gaze; now shift them from right to left several times; do not overtax; rest every few moments by closing the lids for a little while. Repeat these exercises several times. Next, lift the eyes upward to an imaginary point above the head, and lower them as far as possible. Repeat this ten times. Next roll them around in a circle, from left to right, and vice versa. This is the most efficacious exercise of all—it must be gently performed and not overdone. The value of these gymnastics is greatly enhanced by pouring a solution of boracic acid into the eyes before beginning. A good preparation consists of a

saturated solution of boracic acid in camphor water, or this simple formula:

Boracic acid.....20 grains
Sodium chlorid.....2 grains
Distilled water.....1 ounce

Mix, use as eye wash.

Massage of the eyeballs and lids is also greatly restorative. Painful eyes are frequently relieved by this means, and discolored, wrinkled lids are astonishingly benefited.

Use the tip of the middle finger, as it is the longest, beginning at the inner corner of the lid and sweeping gently outward. Bathing the eyes in very hot water first, to which salt and borax have been added, brings the blood to the surface as well as opens the pores and places the parts in better condition to be benefited by the treatment.

Anoint the finger tip with oil—refined olive oil or almond oil—and proceed with the movements as outlined above. Do not press heavily on the eyeball; this does no good, and may do harm. If a little of the oil gets between the lids and touches the eye, no injury will result if the best and blandest oil is used.

The delicate mucous membrane that lines the eyelids is almost invariably involved where there is eye strain. Sometimes a chronic inflammation results that effectually mars the beauty of an eye, for no matter how lovely the eye itself may be, chronically inflamed and reddened eyelids reduce it completely. A simple lotion for this condition, which is called conjunctivitis, may be all that is

required to remove the trouble. The prescription for the lotion will be sent upon application.

The eyes should be thoroughly bathed with this solution four or five times daily.

The best way to do this is by using an eye cup and giving the eyes *baths*. Many specialists object to the cup because most people exert pressure upon the eyeballs when using it. Above everything else this must be avoided;

and the eye cup can be used with great benefit if a little care is exercised in applying it. Gently rest the closed eye upon the cup, throw the head up, lifting the cup with it; while maintaining this position, flutter the lids in the bath.

Stronger solutions than the one given above may be necessary in granular lids. A good one consists of:

Zinc sulphate
1 to 2 grains
Distilled water
1 ounce

Mix, place one drop in the eye with an eye drop-

per three times daily.

Much of the beauty and expressiveness of the face depends upon the brows and lashes. While they are valuable aids to beauty, they are also highly essential in preserving the health and general condition of the eyeballs—in other words, they are *protectors*.

Few women are artists when it comes to improving or beautifying the features nature bestowed upon them. The entire character can be changed—outwardly—by modifying the contour of the brows alone. Stage people bestow a



The eye-bath is wonderfully restorative.

V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1
XUM

tremendous amount of subtle treatment upon them; but they are sadly neglected elsewhere.

Very full eyebrows and those that meet in the center are decidedly unprepossessing, beside denoting unpleasant characteristics. Highly arched, delicately penciled brows are beautiful in themselves, while they impart an air of distinction and high breeding to the plainest face. The excess of growth can easily be removed with tiny cilia forceps. The hairs must be removed



Train the eyebrows by daily grooming with a tiny brush.

one at a time, care and patience being required, as in everything else that is worth while. No novice should attempt to reshape the brows; only a specialist is competent to do this. However, much can be done to *train* them by careful grooming with a small, stiff brush made expressly for this purpose.

It is a fortunate thing that the brows and lashes do not fade and drop out as a result of sickness and lack of care, as is the case with the hair upon the scalp—although the brows are frequently the

seat of dandruff and other annoying skin conditions. Daily grooming not only trains the hair to grow prettily and to lie flat, while imparting a luster to it as well, but it also prevents dandruff by keeping it in a healthy condition.

Heavy, shaggy brows may need a little additional treatment. A little gum arabic water, applied with a camel's-hair brush, keeps them in good position. Peroxide of hydrogen makes them lighter in color, and therefore less noticeable. By this it is not meant to bleach the brows, simply to touch them up now and then, and make them a shade or two lighter. This relieves the heaviness, and in time the long, straggling hairs drop out. Persisting pinching of the brows between the fingers, pressing and kneading them into shape, will eventually coax them into greater attractiveness. A hair tonic is an excellent thing to rub into the brows when dandruff has made its appearance. This is a good one:

TONIC FOR DANDRUFF.

Tincture of cantharides.....	1 ounce
Olive oil.....	1 ounce
Bay rum.....	5 ounces

Rub this well into the brows with the finger tips.

Very light and scant brows give the face a vacant, insipid, expressionless aspect that may even be repellent. Crude petrolatum rubbed well into the parts will stimulate the growth of hairs. A French ointment highly thought of for this purpose contains:

Red vaseline.....	10 grams
Boric acid.....	10 centigrams

When applying to the lashes, care must be taken that it does not enter and irritate the eye.

Beautiful, silky, curling lashes are universally conceded a great attraction. They lend to the eyes of women a baffling innocence that is very fascinating. Perhaps their rarity makes them all the more admired. Lanolin, as well as cocoa butter, are excellent for promoting the growth of lashes. Warm these fats before using them, as they are better applied in liquid form and with a camel's-hair brush. It is somewhat difficult to anoint the roots of the lashes.

A good way is to draw the upper lid well down upon the cheek, and then apply the remedy. A lotion much favored for improving the brows and lashes consists of:

Tincture of cantharides.....	3 drams
Olive oil.....	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce
Oil of nutmeg.....	12 drops
Oil of rosemary.....	12 drops

This also is carefully applied with a camel's-hair brush.

The lashes are frequently the seat of scaliness, or of tiny pimply eruptions, the result of a run-down system, or weak, strained eyes. Hot compresses of a solution of boracic acid is frequently remedial. This removes all scales and crusts, and an ointment can then be applied if desired. The one given below is almost a specific for this condition of the lashes:

Salicylic acid.....	5 grains
Yellow oxide of mercury.....	1 dram
Rose water ointment.....	3 drams

Mix: In employing the ointment, great care must be observed not to get any in the eye. It is applied to the margins of the lids, and, if the scaliness involves a portion of the lid, that part is also anointed.

Eyelashes that have a tendency to turn inward and grow toward the eye act as an irritant, and may create considerable trouble before the cause is located. It is a good plan to inspect the brows and lashes regularly, and weed out all useless and objectionable hairs. Those that have become inverted should be removed without delay. A pair of small tweezers can be used.

Dark brows and lashes are considered highly desirable, and means of procuring them eagerly sought after. The ladies of the Orient use a preparation called "Kohl," which is a strong poison and, therefore, dangerous to use. The smoke from burning gum camphor, collected on a china plate and mixed with a small amount of cold cream, makes an excellent and harmless brow and lash darkener. India ink is extensively and commonly used for this purpose. It can simply be dissolved in water and applied with a brush; or it can be made

into a paste by mixing with suet and curd soap. Vanity boxes containing brow and lash pencils are convenient and handy when these aids to beauty are required.

Mention must be made of the unpleasant habits of contracting the brows until deep furrows are formed between them; of wrinkling the lids and of cultivating crow's-feet with tricks and mannerisms of facial expressions; all



Carefully remove inverted eyelashes with small tweezers.

these are very disfiguring; the eyes are like gems—the beauty of which is enhanced by their setting.

To conquer the deep furrows resulting from frowns is no easy task, because the habit must first be overcome. A clever means of doing this is to smooth out the furrows and iron them down with adhesive plaster. This can be worn during the night and the greater part of the day when remaining indoors; since the brows cannot be contracted when held in position with a bit of plaster, the habit is gradually outgrown; in the meantime, massage of the

furrows with fattening cream will fill them out.

The same treatment applies to crow's-feet. Hot-water compresses, to soften the tissues and open the pores, followed by massage with circular movements, rubbing in a good nourishing flesh cream, will smooth out the wrinkles like magic. This is immediately followed with strips of adhesive plaster running from the temple to the cheek, which is left in position as long as possible.

One of the finest wrinkle eradicators is made of:

White wax.....	1 ounce
Spermacti	1 ounce
Lanolin	2 ounces
Coconut oil.....	2 ounces
Oil of sweet almonds.....	4 ounces
Tincture of benzoin.....	½ dram
Orange-flower water.....	2 ounces

Melt the oils and fats in a double boiler, beat them until cold and creamy; add, little by little, the benzoin, then the orange-flower water.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

LAKEVIEW, O.—It is dangerous to tamper with moles with caustics and the like. Only an expert physician should be consulted, under whose skillful hand they are easily removed with the electric needle or the knife. You failed to inclose a stamped envelope for private reply.

MOTHER.—Ringworm is highly contagious. One suffering from this condition should really be isolated; this not being possible, the greatest precautions must be taken to prevent it from spreading to other members of the household.

OINTMENT FOR RINGWORM.

Boric acid.....	30 grains
Oleate of copper.....	24 grains
Lanolin	½ ounce

Mix. If it does not prove strong enough, the amount of oleate of copper can be increased.

A small amount of this ointment is rubbed into the diseased spot night and morning, no water being allowed to come into contact with it.

A. B. C.—This is a season of chapped lips and skins, and it might be well to make your inquiry one of general interest. Always after the toilet of the face or the mouth, the lips should be anointed with a soothing and healing application, for it is better to *prevent*

them from chapping than to wait until this condition is reached. It may become very painful and very difficult to heal; indeed, a permanent deformity may result from a chronic fissure of the lip.

A soothing ointment for chapped lips:

Solution of boroglyceride (50 per cent.)	3 drams
Lanolin	4 drams
Rose ointment.....	4 drams

Some housewives experience great trouble in keeping the hands "nice" during the cold weather. Care must be observed to dry them thoroughly after they have been in water, and never to expose them to the cold air. The preparation given below for chapped hands has several things to recommend it, especially menthol, which allays pain and itching; for this reason it is an excellent mixture to use upon any portion of the body (nose, ears, et cetera) that has suffered from cold:

Menthol	½ dram
Quince seed.....	½ ounce
Glycerine	1 ounce
Alcohol	4 ounces
Water enough to make a mucilage.	

The quince seed is soaked in a pint of water for twenty-four hours, frequently stirred, and then strained with gentle pressure through muslin, and the full volume with water made up to one pint. The glycerine is then added, and finally the alcohol and menthol; the whole is then briskly stirred.

For cracks or fissures of the hands, feet, and lips:

Prepared suet.....	1 ounce
Rose ointment.....	1 ounce
Salicylic acid.....	30 grains
Sublimed sulphur.....	30 grains

To "prepare" suet: Melt enough fresh suet over a slow fire to make one ounce, and while in the fluid state add from 10 to 30 grains of gum camphor; mix them thoroughly, remove from the fire, and beat up the whole well; when cool add the other ingredients, and beat into a fine cream.

APPRECIATIVE.—I am glad you have found my formulas so satisfactory. Yes, I believe you might be able to make a cosmetic jelly successfully. Here are directions for making glycerine jelly (plain):

Thin French gelatine.....	½ ounce
Glycerine of borax.....	10 ounces
Triple rose water.....	6 ounces
Water	5 ounces

Soak the gelatine in the water all night in a porcelain pot, and next morning place the pot in a saucepan with water and heat until the gelatine is dissolved; then add the glycerine and rose water. This jelly is serviceable in greasy and rough skins.

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.



You Can Go Where Others Go!

THE only difficult part of GOING UP is in making up your mind to START.

You may be working under such circumstances that advance seems impossible, but **YOU CAN GO UP**. You may now have a fairly good position, but you can go still higher. Just follow the example set by thousands of I. C. S. students who have made good and are making good. Every month an average of over 400 students of the International Correspondence Schools voluntarily report an increase in their earnings.

These are not exceptional cases. There are thousands of them. The I. C. S. will tell you who they are and where they are.

Architects, Engineers, Electricians, Designers, Draughtsmen, Inventors have been and are students of the I. C. S. Large employers of labor regard I. C. S. training as proof of ability.

With all this evidence, do you doubt its power to help you?

If you do, here is an offer to prove it. Mark and mail the coupon at once, and the I. C. S. will send you more evidence. If you are not perfectly satisfied you are under no obligations to proceed further.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

Box 599, SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark **X**.

Automobile Running
 Mine Superintendent
 Mine Foreman
 Plumbing, Steam Fitting
 Concrete Construction
 Civil Engineer
 Textile Manufacturing
 Stationary Engineer
 Telephone Expert
 Mechan. Engineer
 Mechanical Draftsman
 Electrical Engineer
 Elec. Lighting Supt.
 Agriculture
 Electric Railways
 Structural Engineer
 R. R. Construction
 Metal Mining
 English Branches
 Gas Engineer
 Foreman Plumber

Civil Service
 Architect
 Chemist
 Languages
 Italian
 Commercial English
 Building Contractor
 Architectural Draftsman
 Industrial Designing
 Commercial Illustrating
 Window Trimming
 Show Card Writing
 Advertising Man
 Stenographer
 Bookkeeper
 Cotton Manufacturing
 Woollen Manufacturing
 Toolmaking
 Foundry Work
 Pattern Making
 Blacksmithing
 Surveyor
 Poultry Farming

Name _____
 Present Occupation _____
 Street and No. _____
 City _____

V
1
4
-
2

N
O
V

1
1
XUM

**The
Perfect
Soda
Cracker**



Uneeda Biscuit are the perfect soda crackers. The flour used must meet a perfect test. The very purity of the water is made doubly sure. Even the air in the mixing and bake-rooms is filtered. The temperature and humidity of the atmosphere is accurately regulated to a uniform degree. The sponge is kneaded by polished paddles. The baking is done in the cleanest of modern ovens. Then Uneeda Biscuit are packed fresh in the purple and white package that keeps them crisp and good from oven to table. Is it any wonder that

Uneeda Biscuit

are recognized as
the National Soda
Cracker ?

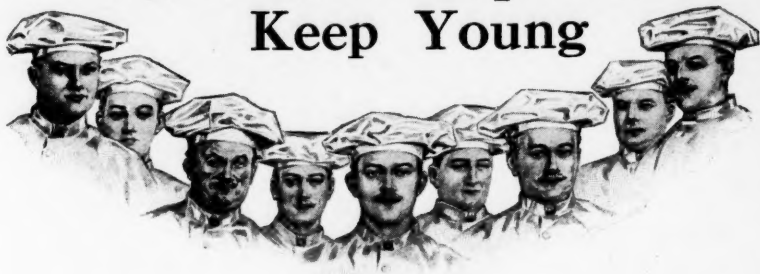
*Never Sold
in Bulk*

5¢

*In the moisture-proof
package*

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

Let Them Help You Keep Young



Listen, Madam:

You could, if you wished, spin flax and weave cloth—knit the men's socks—do your sewing by hand, just as our grandmothers did. And you can, as they did, bake beans.

But don't you think women's time is now better employed? And don't you know that modern women keep younger?

Our part in the change lies in baking good beans. Our chefs are now baking for a million homes.

They send the beans to you all ready to serve, with all the fresh oven flavor. And this expert service costs you less than home baking, because our chefs bake for so many.

They use Michigan beans—just the whitest and plumppest, picked out by hand. They make their sauce from whole, vine-ripened tomatoes. It costs five times what common sauce would cost.

*"The
National
Dish"*

VanCamp's
BAKED
WITH TOMATO
SAUCE
PORK AND BEANS

*"The
National
Dish"*

Another pity is, with home baking, folks don't get beans enough. Beans are 23 per cent nitrogenous—84 per cent nutriment. They are richer than beef in nutriment, yet cost but one-third as much.

Beans are our racial food—the favorite

They bake the tomato sauce, like the pork, with the beans. The delicious zest goes clear through.

They have steam-heated ovens always kept at 245 degrees. Thus they give to each bean more than twice the heat that gets to most of the home-baked beans. As a result, Van Camp's digest. They don't tax the stomach, don't ferment and form gas, don't go to waste like home-baked beans.

The beans come out nut-like, mealy and whole—none broken, none mushy, none crisped, none hard. That's because we bake in steam ovens.

The home way requires full sixteen hours of soaking, boiling and baking. The meal for tomorrow must be started today. Our way means a dozen meals, ready on the pantry shelf.

Don't you know of a way to spend bean-baking time in some happier way out of the kitchen?

dish of the hungry. The only reason why you don't serve them often is this bother of home baking.

Please try the best beans in America. Not common baked beans—not inferior beans. Tell your grocer to send Van Camp's.

Three Sizes: 10, 15 and 20 Cents Per Can

Van Camp Packing Company (Estab. 1861) Indianapolis, Ind.

[185]

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

The Magazine Sen

Cosmopolitan Secures America's Greatest

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

and the very best in romantic novels, are synonymous in American literature. His productions, one and all, rank as the greatest that America has produced. Take "The Common Law," for instance, or "The Fighting Chance." They are simply unrivaled. To-day Chambers is at the height of his power. Readers of COSMOPOLITAN will find his new novel, "The Turning Point," to be his best—actually and literally his *best*.


CHARLES DANA GIBSON

will illustrate "The Turning Point." His matchless drawings are famous the world over. Among pen and ink artists he is supreme, and the illustrations for "The Turning Point" will stand out among his finest efforts.

Incidentally, five-year contracts with both Chambers and Gibson secure the work of these pre-eminent artists exclusively for COSMOPOLITAN readers.

HOW TO SAVE

At the end of this month, the subscription price of "Cosmopolitan" Magazine advances to **\$1.50** a year. For the present the price is **\$1**. Now is the time to order. If you subscribe to-day, each subscription will save you 50 cents, and by subscribing



COSMOP

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

sation for 1911

Exclusive Rights to Authors and Artists

DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

ranks as the great realist of modern fiction. Human hearts and lives lay naked before him. He swept aside the flimsy draperies of convention and looked squarely at the inner workings of Life. What he saw he wove into the most delightful and masterly novels of a decade. And yet, big as his earliest novels were, "The Price She Paid" is even greater. It was his last—and his masterpiece. Be sure to read it.

HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

will illustrate "The Price She Paid," and his superb drawings add strong pictorial emphasis to the charm of the story. The "Christy Girl" needs no comment, but it is noteworthy that the serial work of both Phillips and Christy will appear exclusively in COSMOPOLITAN.

FROM \$1 TO \$2.50

2, 3 or 5 years in advance, you will be saving from \$1 to \$2.50. Every subscription that reaches us after Nov. 10th will cost \$1.50—every subscription that comes in before then will cost only \$1. This is your last chance. Take advantage of it now.

COSMOPOLITAN



8, 11-11

Cosmopolitan
Magazine,
381 Fourth Ave.,
N. Y. City, N. Y.

Please send me
COSMOPOLITAN
for..... years.
Herewith I enclose
\$.....

Name.....

Street.....

City.....

State.....

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

MAKE YOURSELF 3 INCHES TALLER

THE WONDERFUL DIFFERENCE OF AN INCH IN HEIGHT

can be thoroughly appreciated by standing a short man and a tall man under a measuring rod. It will be found that the difference, in inches, is very slight. By the recent discovery of a well-known Rochester business man, all short people can now secure the additional inch or two necessary to make them as tall as the average person.

The simple method he has discovered can be used at home by anybody of either sex, so that they will surely grow from 2 to 5 inches in height. Even the very old can increase their height perceptibly. There is **no pain**, no operation, no electricity, no drugs about this harmless method. It can be used in the privacy of your own home, and necessitates no loss of time or detention from business. Eminent doctors, scientists and gymnasium experts have endorsed this method. It has been adopted by the leading universities and schools. It accomplishes this seemingly wonderful result in a perfect, hygienic, natural and harmless way. It not only adds to your height, but increases your **chest measurement**, enlarges your **lung capacity**, broadens your **shoulders** and helps your health every way.

ABSOLUTELY FREE TO ALL In order to enable all short persons to obtain the many advantages of increased height, the inventor has published an interesting book, beautifully illustrated from life, which he will send free to anyone who asks for it. This free book tells exactly how it is done. It contains the pictures and statements of many who have used this method. After you have read it, you will clearly understand how to secure all the advantages that increased height brings, and forever end the embarrassment of being called "short." If you would like to increase your height and secure a perfect figure, send your name and address to-day. The book will be sent to you at once, all charges prepaid, in a plain package. All correspondence is strictly confidential.

THE CARTILAGE COMPANY,
155 Unity Bldg., Rochester, N. Y.



No More Gray Hair



The only reliable way to restore the natural color of gray or faded hair is by using the

QUEEN GRAY HAIR RESTORER

It is perfectly harmless, absolutely safe, and cannot be detected. One application gives any shade desired. It is a cleanly, harmless way to regain

YOUTHFUL LOOKS

Easy to apply, without odor or stickiness, and does not rub nor wash off. Leaves the hair glossy and fluffy. Two SIZES—40c, \$1.00; sold by leading druggists and department stores or sent by mail in plain wrapper, on receipt of price. Special trial size mailed for 10c.

QUEEN CHEMICAL CO., Dept. 4, BUFFALO, N. Y.

Don't Wear a Truss



Brooks' Appliance is a new scientific discovery with automatic air cushions that draws the broken parts together and binds them as you would a broken limb. It absolutely holds firmly and comfortably and never slips, always light and cool and conforms to every movement of the body without chafing or hurting. I make it to your measure and send it to you on a strict guarantee of satisfaction or money refunded and I have put my price so low that anybody, rich or poor, can buy it. Remember, I make it to your order—send it to you—you wear it—and if it doesn't satisfy you, you send it back to me and I will refund your money. The banks or any responsible citizen in Marshall will tell you that is the way I do business—always absolutely on the square and I have sold to thousands of people this way for the past five years. Remember, I use no salves, no harness, no lies, no fakes. I just give you a straight business deal at a reasonable price. C. E. Brooks, 5472 Brooks Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

WINCHESTER'S HYPOPHOSPHITES OF LIME AND SODA (DR. CHURCHILL'S Formula) and WINCHESTER'S SPECIFIC PILL ARE THE BEST REMEDIES FOR

Exhausted
or
Debilitated

NERVE FORCE

They contain no Mercury, Iron, Cantharides, Morphia, Strychnia, Opium, Alcohol, Cocaine, etc.

The Specific Pill is purely vegetable, has been tested and prescribed by physicians, and has proven to be the best and most effective treatment known to medical science for restoring impaired Vitality, no matter how originally caused, as it reaches the root of the ailment. Our remedies are the best of their kind, and contain only the best and purest ingredients that money can buy and science produce; therefore we cannot offer free samples.

Price, ONE DOLLAR per Box, by First-class Mail

No Humbug, C. O. D., or Treatment Scheme

PERSONAL OPINIONS:

Dear Sirs: For Neurasthenia The Hypophosphites are our mainstays.—Dr. JAY G. ROBERTS, of Philadelphia, Pa.

I can certify to the extreme purity of your Hypophosphites.—Dr. L. PITKIN, NEW YORK.

I have taken this excellent remedy (Winchester's Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda) as a Nerve Food by my Physician's order. It has so greatly benefited me that I hope other sufferers may be helped likewise.—Miss ELLA H. JOHNSON, Irvington, New York.

I don't think there is a more honest remedy for Nervous Debility than your Specific Pill.—B. R., Princeton, Ills.

I find your remedies excellent.—Assistant Attorney General, N. D.

Send for free treatise securely sealed.

Winchester & Co., 1019 Beekman Bldg., N. Y.

Est. 50 years.

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."



WE INVITE EVERY THIN MAN AND WOMAN

This is an invitation that no thin man or woman can afford to ignore. We invite you to try a new treatment called **"Sargol"** that helps digest the food you eat—that puts good, solid flesh on people that are thin and under weight.

How can "Sargol" do this? We will tell you. This new treatment is a scientific, assimilative agent. It increases cell growth, the very substance of which our bodies are made—puts red corpuscles in the blood which every thin person so sadly needs, strengthens the nerves and puts the digestive tract in such shape that every ounce of food gives out its full amount of nourishment to the blood instead of passing through the system undigested and unassimilated.

Women who never appear stylish in anything they wear because of their thinness, men under weight or lacking in nerve force or energy have been made to enjoy the pleasures of life—been fitted to fight life's battles, as never for years, through the use of "Sargol."

If you want a beautiful and well-rounded figure of which you can be justly proud—a body full of throbbing life and energy, write the Sargol Company, 390-K, Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y., today, for 50c. box "Sargol," absolutely free, and use with every meal.

But you say you want proof! Well, here you are. Here is the statement of those who have tried—been convinced—

and will swear to the virtues of this preparation:

REV. GEORGE W. DAVIS says:

"I have made a faithful trial of the Sargol treatment and must say it has brought to me new life and vigor. I have gained twenty pounds and now weigh 170 pounds, and, what is better, I have gained the days of my boyhood. It has been the turning point of my life."

MRS. A. I. RODENHEISER writes:

"I have gained immensely since I took Sargol. For I only weighed about 106 pounds when I began using it and now I weigh 130 pounds, so really this makes twenty-four pounds. I feel stronger and am looking better than ever before, and now I carry rosy cheeks, which is something I could never say before."

CLAY JOHNSON says:

"Please send me another ten-day treatment. I am well pleased with Sargol. It has been the light of my life. I am getting back to my proper weight again. When I began to take Sargol I only weighed 138 pounds, and now, four weeks later, I am weighing 153 pounds and feeling fine."

F. GAGNON writes:

"Here is my report since taking the Sargol treatment. I am a man 67 years of age and was all run down to the very bottom. I had to quit work, as I was so weak. Now, thanks to Sargol, I look like a new man. I gained 22 pounds with 23 days' treatment. I cannot tell you how happy I feel."

MRS. VERNIE ROUSE says:

"Sargol is certainly the grandest treatment I ever used. I took only two boxes of Sargol. My weight was 120 pounds and now I weigh 140 and feel better than I have for five years. I am now as fleshy as I want to be, and shall certainly recommend Sargol, for it does just exactly what you say it will do."

Full address of any of these people if you wish.

Probably you are now thinking whether all this can be true. Stop it! "Sargol" does make thin people add flesh, but we don't ask you to take our word for it. Write us today and we will send you absolutely free a 50c. package for trial. **Cut off coupon below and pin to your letter.**

THIS COUPON GOOD FOR 50c. PACKAGE "SARGOL"

This coupon entitles any thin person to one 50c. package "Sargol" (provided you have never tried it). The Sargol Company, 390-K Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y.

TREASURE UNDER STRANGE STARS

By ROBERT WELLES RITCHIE

The thrilling tale of a treasure hunt in the islands of the South Seas, in which the adventurers meet with desperate adventures, and run afoul of the native head hunters. It is a remarkable novel of stirring action. Complete in the

FIRST NOVEMBER Number of the

Popular

ON SALE
OCTOBER TENTH

\$1 50**Takes This
4-PIECE
Mission
SET**

\$150 brings you this entire mission set—the rich, massive library table, the two elegant comfort rockers and the big, handsome arm chair. These elegant pieces are all made of best selected solid oak in the popular weathered oak finish. Seats of rockers and chair are heavily padded and upholstered in high-grade Imperial leather. A beautiful set that you will be proud to show.

50c PER MONTH Just let us put this 4-piece set in your home for a 30-day trial. Show it to your friends. Test it thoroughly—then if at the end of the 30 days you are not satisfied with it in every way, notify us and we'll send for the goods and refund every cent paid. If you're perfectly satisfied at the end of 30 days and wish to keep the set, send us only 50c per month until you have paid our special, low, direct-from-factory price of..... **\$975**

FREE CREDIT to ALL—MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

We charge no interest and make absolutely no extra charges whatever for our credit service. And our terms are the most liberal in existence. All deals are kept strictly confidential, so that no one need know you are buying on credit. Our credit prices are actually 15 to 50% lower than cash prices elsewhere, because our 22 im-

mense retail stores and over a million customers make it possible for us to buy our goods in far bigger quantities and at much lower prices than any other similar concern on earth. Our strong guarantee—backed by our enormous capital and multi-million dollar resources protects you on every purchase.



CATALOG FREE "A Message of Joy" will be sent you free on request. It's the finest and most elaborate catalog ever printed by a home-furnishing concern. Costs us \$1.25 to print and mail each copy. It pictures in actual colors over 5000 different articles, such as stoves, ranges, rugs, curtains and furniture of all kinds, as well as silverware, glassware, chinaware, crockery, etc. It contains 330 pages showing everything for the home at unduplicated prices—330 pages that give you your choice of the world's best bargains and plenty of time to pay for them. Post card sent today will bring you the book right away.

HARTMAN FURNITURE & CARPET CO.

3940 East Wentworth Ave., Chicago, Ill.

— Largest, oldest and best known home-furnishing concern in the world — (56)
Established 1855—56 years of success. 22 Great stores—1,000,000 Customers.

**Geisha Diamonds**

THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Bright, sparkling, beautiful. For brilliancy they equal the genuine, standing all test and puzzle experts. One twentieth the expense. Sent free with privilege of examination. For particulars, prices, etc., address

THE R. GREGG MFG. & IMPT. CO.

Dept. 5 517 Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

I will send as long as they last my **25c BOOK****STRONG ARMS**

for 10c in stamps or coin

Illustrated with 20 full page halftone cuts, showing exercises that will quickly develop, beautify, and gain great strength in your shoulders, arms, and hands, without any apparatus.

PROF. ANTHONY BARKER

472 Barker Bldg., 110 West 42d St., New York

6171 \$35

6065 \$75

6172 \$40

6255 \$60

6225 \$25

65 \$205

6198 \$30

6230 \$50

6233 \$35

6032 \$40

6034 \$50

6029 \$25

6200 \$40

6047 \$150

6169 \$25

5525 \$25

DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

20% DOWN 10% PER MONTH

Why wait for your Diamond until you have saved the price? Pay for it by the Lyon Method. Lyon's Diamonds are guaranteed perfect blue-white. A written guarantee accompanies each Diamond. All goods sent prepaid for inspection. 10% discount for cash. Send now for catalog No. 89

J. M. LYON & CO., Est. 1843 71-73 Nassau St., N. Y.

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

XUM

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION

Rate, 50c. a line, or \$2.61½ a line, which includes AINSLEE'S and POPULAR Magazines, making a total of 4,000,000 readers—the cheapest and best Classified Advertising medium on the market. Next issue of SMITH'S closes Oct. 5th.

Agents & Help Wanted

AGENTS WANTED in every county to sell the Transparent Handle Pocket Knife. Big commission paid. From \$75 to \$300 a month can be made. Write for terms. Novelty Cutlery Co., No. 15 Bar St., Canton, Ohio.

AGENT'S OUTFIT FREE. QUICK PROFITS. Best Handkerchiefs, Dress Goods and Fancy Goods on the market. Large Manufacturer. Particulars for stamp. Maricopa Mfg. Co., 85 Water Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

HONEST MAN OR WOMAN WANTED in every town to represent well known wholesale firm. Experience unnecessary. Must furnish good references. Easy, pleasant work. Fair salary to start. McLean, Black & Co., 276 Medford St., Boston, Mass.

WE HAVE something new for salesmen making small towns. A neat, clean, quick selling pocket sideline. If interested write for order book today. Burd Mfg. Co., 231 No. 5th Avenue, Chicago.

\$25 Weekly and expenses to men and women to collect names, distribute samples and advertise. Steady work. C. H. Emery, M. G., Chicago, Ill.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE wanted. Splendid income assured. Right man to act as our representative after learning our business thoroughly by mail. Former experience unnecessary. All we require is honesty, ability, ambition and willingness to learn a lucrative business. No soliciting or traveling. This is an exceptional opportunity for a man in your section to get into a big paying business without capital and become independent for life. Write at once for full particulars. E. R. Marden, Pres., The Nat'l. Co-Op. Real Estate Co., 1338 Marden Bldg., Washington, D. C.

LARUE'S PINE TAR PASTE, and Velvety Paste are high grade, down to date, cleaning specialties which competition has not touched. No live agent or dealer can afford to be without them. Samples 10c. prepaid. F. C. LaRue Soap Co., Department C, 584 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York.

LIVE AGENTS and Brush men everywhere will do well to send for New Capitol Catalogue. Best house to house line in America. Write for territory. Address Agency Depart., Capitol Brush Co., Hartford, Conn.

Agents and Help Wanted—Continued.

RAINCOATS—"Maker to Wearer," manufacturers' prices. Write for particulars, samples. Agents wanted. Regal Raincoat Co., 1367 B'way, N.Y.

100% PROFIT to agents selling the Klean Pipe. No experience required—sells itself. When smokers see its novelty, utility and cleanliness, the sale is made. Thousands in use. A great chance to make easy money. Retails—Bent Stem \$1.00—Straight Stem 75c. Illustrated booklet and terms to agents free. R. D. Gates, 306 N. East Avenue, Oak Park, Ill.

AGENTS wanted in every county to sell the Baldwin Patented "Four-In-One" House Dress. Make \$50.00 to \$200.00 a month. Write for terms. Baldwin Garment Company, Dept. G, Holyoke, Mass.

GOVERNMENT WANTS EMPLOYEES. Write for list of positions open. Franklin Institute, Dept. N-7, Rochester, N. Y.

FREE ILLUSTRATED BOOK tells about over 360,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet A 23. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

A HIGH CLASS WOMAN WANTED in every town who feels herself capable of earning \$30 weekly to represent us in the sale of our marvelous New Metabone Keapshape Corset. Bends sideways, backwards, and forward with the body. Never loses its shape. Bones guaranteed not to rust or break. Awarded grand prize and gold medal this year at Brussels over all competitors. Awarded gold medal by the London and Paris Dress Exhibition. Sells at sight. Worn by prominent actresses like Blanche Ring, Grace LaRue and Nora Bayes. Latest Parisian Corset sensation. Address Harriett Meta, Suite 77B, 25 W. 38th Street, N. Y.

BEST SIDE LINE ON EARTH: clean cut proposition; pocket samples; prompt commissions; consigned goods; Dry Manufacturing Co., 1420 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—Handkerchiefs, Dress Goods. Carleton made \$8.00 one afternoon; Mrs. Bosworth \$25.00 in two days. Free Samples. Credit. Stamp brings particulars. Freeport Mfg. Company, 45 Main St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Agents and Help Wanted—Continued

AGENTS—Male and Female—make \$25 daily selling my Willow Plumes. Prices—18 inches, \$6; 20 inches, \$7.50; 26 inches, \$10. You can easily realize double the amount. Cat free. Joseph Gluck, 621 B'way, N. Y.

Patents and Lawyers

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE returned. Send sketch for free report as to patentability. Guide Book and What to Invent, with valuable List of Inventions Wanted, sent free. One Million Dollars offered for one invention. Patents secured by us advertised free in World's Progress, sample free. Victor J. Evans & Co., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PROTECT AND PAY. Books Free. Highest references; best results. Send for list of Inventions Wanted. Patents advertised Free. Send sketch or model for Free search. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, 622 F Street, Washington, D. C.

ONE INVENTOR gets rich; another gets nothing. New 128 page book—Patent Fortune—of Vital Advice, Great Value and Intense Interest to Inventors, tells why. About Prizes, Rewards, etc. Fortune-Making Inventions, Past and Future. Mailed for 20 cents postage. Publishers Patent Sense, Dept. 62, Barrister Bldg., Washington, D. C.

Music

SONG Poems with or without music wanted for publication. All subjects. Original. Examination and criticism free. Eaton, Desk N, 1370 B'way, N.Y.

BIG MONEY WRITING SONGS. Thousands of dollars for anyone who can write successful words or music. Past experience unnecessary. Send us your song poems, with or without music, or write for free particulars. Acceptance Guaranteed If Available. Washington only place to secure copyright. H. Kirkus, Duodale Co., Dept. 256, Washington, D. C.

For the Deaf

THE DEAF HEAR INSTANTLY with the Acousticon. For personal use; also for churches and theatres. Special instruments. You must hear before you purchase. Booklet free. General Acoustic Company, 205 Beaufort St., Jamaica, New York City

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

A BEAUTIFUL COMPLEXION AND GRACEFUL FIGURE



The World's Greatest Facial Remedy Restores Injured Complexions to the Beauty and Purity of Youth.

If your blood is impure, or if you have pimples, freckles, wrinkles, blackheads, redness of face or nose, a muddy, sallowness or any blemish under the skin, you need Dr. James P. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Wafers.

These marvelous beautifiers of the complexion, skin and form are wonderfully effective and are absolutely safe and harmless.

\$1.00 per Box. Full thirty days treatment. Every box contains 120 wafers, (which must be stamped on every box). Sent by mail in plain cover to any address.

RICHARD FINK CO., Dept. 54, 415 Broadway, New York



I TRUST YOU TEN DAYS. SEND NO MONEY. 22 Hair Switch Sent on Approval. Choice of Natural wavy or straight hair. Send a lock of your hair, and I will mail a 22 inch short stem fine human hair switch to match. If you find it a big bargain send \$2 in ten days, or sell 5 and GET YOUR SWITCH FREE. Extra shades a little more. Write for postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade switches, pompadours, wigs, puffs, etc. Women wanted to sell my hair goods.

ANNA AYERS, Dept. B77, 22 Quincy St., Chicago



Mount Birds

We teach you by mail to stuff and mount all kinds of Birds, Animals, Game Heads. Also to tan skins and make rugs. Be your own taxidermist. Decorate your home with your beautiful trophies or increase your income selling specimens and mounting for others. Easily, quickly learned in spare time by men and women. Highest endorsements by thousands of students. Write today for our great free book "How to Mount Birds and Animals." Free—write today. N. W. School of Taxidermy, 1158 Elwood Bldg., Omaha, Neb.

DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

This Diamond Ring is our great special. Only the finest quality pure white diamonds, perfect in cut and full of fiery brilliancy are used. Each diamond is skillfully mounted in our famous Loftis "Perfection" 6-prong ring mounting, which possesses every line of delicate grace and beauty.

L-1220—Specially selected fine brilliant white Diamond \$25 \$5 down, \$2.50 a month

"PERFECTION" DIAMOND RINGS

L-1221—Specially selected brilliant white Diamond \$50 \$10 down, \$5 a month.

L-1223—Specially selected brilliant white Diamond \$100 \$20 down, \$10 a month.

The three rings here shown are the most popular although we show all sizes in our large, handsome Catalog. Each ring is solid 14 karat gold, and is cased in a dark blue velvet ring box with white satin lining.

Ask us to send you a Ring on approval. It will be sent at once, all charges prepaid. If you are not perfectly satisfied, return it at our expense. Send for our Free Catalog, telling all about our easy Credit Plan, and make your Christmas selections now, before the rush is on. The early shopper gets first choice. Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, Silverware, at bargain prices.

LOFTIS BROS. & CO., Diamond Cutters,
Dept. F844, 100 to 108 N. State St., CHICAGO, ILL.
Branch Stores: Pittsburg, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo.

An Ideal Gift

SOLID OAK EXTENSION DINING TABLE AND CHAIRS \$20.50

48 inch, Round Top, Pedestal Dining Table, extends to 72 inches, \$13.50. 4 Dining Chairs, \$7. 6 Dining Chairs, \$10

This sensational price is made possible by our original exclusive method of manufacturing in sections and shipping in a compact package which may be unpacked and the furniture made ready for use in thirty minutes.

Don't confuse this furniture with cheap furniture. We manufacture quality furniture only.



You do not risk one cent. Use the furniture for thirty days in your home. Prove our claim that you cannot duplicate it for double our price—then if you are not satisfied, notify us, and we will return all the money you have paid.

Free catalog full of similar bargains, giving full details, and a postal will bring it to you. Send for it today.

BROOKS MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 2811 Rust Ave., Saginaw, Mich.

The oldest and largest firm of its kind in the world.

Business Opportunities

\$100 Monthly and expenses to men and women to travel and distribute samples; big manufacturer. Steady work. S. Scheffer, Treas. MU, Chicago.

Correspondence Schools

FREE TUITION BY MAIL: Civil Service, Drawing, Engineering, electric wiring, agricultural, poultry, normal academic, bookkeeping, shorthand courses. Matriculation \$5. Tuition free to first applicant. Apply to Carnegie College, Rogers, Ohio.

Picture Play Writers

WANTED, moving picture play writers. Great demand for plays. Big pay. Easy to learn. We'll teach you. Send your address. United Picture Play Ass'n, Dept. H, San Francisco.

Photography

FILMS DEVELOPED. 10c. per roll; all sizes. Velox Prints, Brownies, 3c.; 3½x3½, 3½x4½, 4c.; 4x5, 3A.5c. Send two negatives and we will print them free as a sample of our work; we are film specialists, and give you better results than you have ever had. Cole & Co., Asbury Park, N. J.

8x10 PHOTOGRAPHIC Enlargements 25c each, made from any size negative or film. All size 6 exposure Kodak films developed, 5c roll. 12 exposures 10c roll. Send for price list and sample print. Corlett Studios, 45-47 N. 13th St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Short Stories

MAKE MONEY writing short stories for or for Newspapers. Pleasant work for you; big pay. Free booklet tells how. United Press Syndicate, San Francisco.

Coins, Stamps, Etc.

\$7.75 PAID for rare date 1853 quarters; \$20 for a 3¢. Keep all money dated before 1880, and send 10 cents at once for new illustrated Coin Value Book, 4x7. It may mean your fortune. C. F. Clarke Co., Dept. B1, Le Roy, N. Y.

Games & Entertainments

PLAYS, Vaudeville Sketches, Monologues, Dialogues, Speakers, Minstrel Material, Jokes, Recitations, Tableaux, Drills, Musical Pieces, Entertainments, Make Up Goods. Large Catalog Free. T. S. Denison & Co., Dept. 18, Chicago

Miscellaneous

MINERAL Water Discovery. Wonderful for Kidneys and Indigestion. Inquiries solicited; results guaranteed. The Miraco Co., Ltd., Shreveport, La.

STAGE BEAUTY POSES

4 ENTRANCING, FULL-LENGTH "STAGE BEAUTY" POSES **25c**
IN COLORS, 14 INCHES HIGH, ONLY

Also Four Catchy "Follies of 1911" Poses 25c

All exquisite reproductions in sparkling colors, showing rich, warm beauty, delicate coloring and graceful poses of originals exactly as they are—most entrancing series of "real beauties" we ever published. New this Season.

Just the Thing for Your "Den"

FREE! Send 50c (coin, U. S. stamps or money order) at once for full set of Eight poses in Colors, 14 inches high, and illustrations of other fancy poses, art studies, etc., and we will include extra, a richly-colored, full-length "French Bathing Girl" Poster on fancy Panel Mount, 14 inches high, absolutely **FREE**. (This one picture alone is worth 50c.) Send today.

Money Back If Not Satisfied

DOLLAR SPECIALS: Four Hand-Colored "Gems of Art," mounted 9 x 14, \$1.00. Eight Ballet Dancers, in colors, mounted 9 x 14, \$1.00. (Artist Model Pose in colors **FREE** with \$1.00 order.)

GORDON ART CO., Inc., Dept. C 7, NEW YORK CITY.



MY FREE BOOK

"The Whys of Exercise" gives complete instruction how to develop the

ARMS, CHEST AND SHOULDERS.



Health, strength and physical perfection guaranteed. I guarantee that you will derive every benefit from the use of my system and the Progressive and Automatic Exerciser. I guarantee that you will be satisfied. If you are not, simply write me so, at which time I will refund you every cent you have paid me. (Signed) PROF. H. W. TITUS. Rules and Regulations of strict training, giving diet for each day of the week, directions showing you how to double your strength and endurance, increase your weight and develop your muscles rapidly. Regular price \$1.00; will be sent to anyone mailing 10c. in stamps or coin.

PROF. H. W. TITUS,

503 Titus Building, 156 East 23rd Street, New York City

I WILL MAKE YOU PROSPEROUS



If you are honest and ambitious write me today. No matter where you live or what your occupation, I will teach you the Real Estate business by mail; appoint you Special Representative of my Company in your town; start you in a profitable business of your own, and help you make big money at once.

Unusual opportunity for men without capital to become independent for life. Valuable Book and full particulars Free. Write today.

NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE REALTY CO.
124 Marden Building
Washington, D. C.

E. E. Marden, Pres.

Sleep Out-Doors In Your Own Room

This FREE Book Tells You How

—you may receive the benefits of out-of-door sleeping at all seasons—the face only coming in contact with the crisp, out-door air—the body enjoying all the comforts of a warm room, by using a

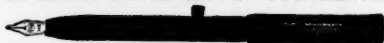
Walsh Window Tent

It is provided with both awning and screen to protect the sleeper from drafts, storms, cold or insects. Instantly adjusted to any window without nails or screws to mar woodwork. Every sleeping room should be equipped with one. If not at your dealers, write for free book—What Fresh Air Will Do.

Recommended By
Eminent Physicians
Satisfaction Guaranteed
CABINET MFG. CO.
363 Main St., Quincy, Ill.



"INDEPENDENT" SELF-FILLING FOUNTAIN PEN



The "Independent" has the simplest device and largest Ink capacity on the market. Filled and cleaned by a simple push of the knob. Locking device makes pen absolutely safe.
No. 62, No. 2 Gold Pen, \$2.00. No. 64, No. 4 Gold Pen, \$2.50
AGENTS WANTED. FREE CATALOG

J. ULLRICH & CO., (607 Thamos Bldg., 27 Thamos St., New York

WHITE VALLEY GEMS IMPORTED from FRANCE

SEE THEM BEFORE PAYING!

These gems are chemical white sapphires—LOOK like Diamonds. Stand acid and fire diamond tests. So hard they easily scratch a file and will cut glass. Brilliant. Many guaranteed 25 years. All mounted in HK solid gold diamond mountings. Will send you any style ring, pin or stud for examination—all charges prepaid—no money in advance. Write today for free illustrated booklet, retail prices and ring measure. **WHITE VALLEY GEM CO.,** Dept. M, 709 Saks Building, Indianapolis, Ind.

THE Keeley Cure

For Liquor and Drug Using

A scientific remedy which has been skilfully and successfully administered by medical specialists for the past 31 years

AT THE FOLLOWING KEELEY INSTITUTES:

Hot Springs, Ark.
Los Angeles, Cal.
San Francisco, Cal.
West Haven, Conn.
Washington, D. C.

Jacksonville, Fla.
Altoona, Ga.
Dwight, Ill.
Marion, Ind.
Lexington, Mass.

Portland, Me.
Grand Rapids, Mich.
Kansas City, Mo.
Manchester, N. H.
Buffalo, N. Y.

White Plains, N. Y.
Philadelphia, Pa.
812 N. Broad St.
Pittsburg, Pa.
4246 Fifth Ave.

Columbus, Ohio.
Providence, R. I.
Columbia, S. C.
Winnipeg, Manitoba.
London, England.

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

A Book That Tells How to Get This Smile!

If you're in good health you should get up in the morning feeling fine enough to smile. If you don't, just sit down now and drop a postal for the book that tells you where the trouble is—144 beautifully illustrated pages giving valuable information about SLEEP and about the famous sleep inducer

OSTERMOOR Mattress \$15.



The only mattress made to stand half a century's use and stay as comfortable as when new. Don't buy the "just-as-good." Our trade-mark is your guarantee. When necessary, we ship mattress 6 ft. 3 in. long by 4 ft. 6 in. wide, weighing 45 lbs., express prepaid, on 30 nights' free trial, same day your order is received. Money back if you want it. Send for the book—sure.

OSTERMOOR & CO., 216 Elizabeth St., New York
Canadian Agency, Alaska Feather & Down Co., Ltd., Montreal.



BARODA DIAMONDS
Flash Like Genuine
ANY STYLE at 1/40 the cost—IN SOLID GOLD RINGS

Stand acid test and expert examination. We guarantee them. See them first—then pay.
Special Offer—14k Tiffany ring 1 ct. \$5.98. Gents ring 1 ct. \$6.98. 14k Stud 1 ct. \$4.85. Sent C.O.D. for inspection. Catalog FREE, shows full line. Patent ring gauge included, 10c. The Baroda Co., Dept. A-9, Leland and Dover St., Chicago

Rémoh Gems

Not Imitations

A marvelously reconstructed gem—the greatest triumph of the electric furnace. *Looks like a diamond—wears like a diamond—will cut glass—stands filing, fire and acid tests like a diamond—guaranteed to contain no glass.* Rémoh Gems have no paste, foil or artificial backing—their brilliancy is guaranteed forever. One thirtieth the cost of a diamond. These remarkable gems are set only in 14 Karat Solid Gold Mountings. Sent on approval—your money cheerfully refunded if not perfectly satisfactory. It will be well worth your while to get our De-Luxe Jewel Book—yours for the asking. Cut out and mail the coupon below—or write a postal. Address

Rémoh Jewelry Co.,
437 N. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.

Rémoh Jewelry Co.,
437 N. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.
Send your De-Luxe Jewel Book.

Name.....
Address.....
City.....
State.....

Sign
And
Mail This
Coupon Today

Corns Ended In Two Days

The pain stops instantly. Within two days the whole corn loosens and comes out.

Blue-jay has done this fifty million times. It will do it for you—that we guarantee—no matter how tough the corn.

The secret lies in a bit of B & B wax—a wonderful invention. It loosens the corn without soreness or pain. You don't feel it at all. The corn is forgotten until it comes out.

Go get it. Don't let corns torment you any more.



- A in the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.
- B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.
- C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.
- D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

Blue-jay Corn Plasters

Also Blue-jay Bunion Plasters
15c and 25c per Package

All Drugists Sell and Guarantee Them
Sample Mailed Free

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York
Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc. (33)



Gold Medal Awarded-Do away with the TRUSS

Stuart's Plas-tr-Pads are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made self-adhesive purposely to hold the parts securely in place. No Straps, Buckles or Springs—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or compress against the pubic bone. Thousands suffering from most obstinate cases, have successfully treated themselves in the privacy of the home without hindrance from work. **SOFT AS VELVET—EASY TO APPLY, INEXPENSIVE. Awarded Gold Medal and Diploma, International Exposition, Rome.** Process of recovery is natural, leaving no further use for the truss. We prove what we say by sending you a trial of Plapao absolutely free.

Write today. Address **THE PLAPAO CORP., Block 702 St. Louis, Mo.**

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."



A Novel Fit for Ainslee's

"The Paupers of Portman Square" is a whimsical, fanciful, altogether delightful romance. It lends distinction to a November number that will lend distinction to AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE. It is the sort of novel that presents an unanswerable argument in favor of the AINSLEE'S custom of having

Everything Complete in Each Number

To slap a reader in the face with a "to-be-continued" notice, after he has once fallen under the spell of the goblin and his fashionable nephew's "grass orphan," would be a gross impertinence. The extraordinary experiences that befall the hero and heroine in this story before they finally find themselves, lead the reader all the way from Society with a great big "S" down to society with a little "s," and back again.

Fascinating Ainslee Short Stories

The editors of AINSLEE'S believe that they have been successful in making the balance of their November number worthy of the novelette. For the short stories, varied as usual in theme and setting, they have drawn upon the best work of such writers as Frank Condon, Nalbro Bartley, Margaretta Tuttle, Carrington Phelps, Prevost Battersby, Courtney Ryley Cooper, Elliott Flower, Olive M. Briggs, L. J. Beeston, and Alice Garland Steele. AINSLEE'S is "the magazine that entertains."

Ainslee's for November

SOLD WHEREVER MAGAZINES ARE READ. READ
WHEREVER MAGAZINES ARE SOLD. 15c. THE COPY

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."



KODAK NEGATIVE—ORDINARY WINDOW LIGHTING.

The Simple, Kodak Way

There's no more delightful side to photography than the making of home portraits. It's all very easy with a Kodak; no dark-room for any part of the work, not even when you do your own developing and printing.

To make every step perfectly clear we have issued a little book—"At Home with the Kodak"—that tells in a non-technical manner just how to proceed. It is profusely illustrated with pictures, which not only show the Kodak results, but show *how they were made*.

Whether you are already a Kodak owner or not, we will gladly send you a copy on request, or it may be had from your dealer.

EASTMAN KODAK CO.,

ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City.*

Promote the Beauty and Purity

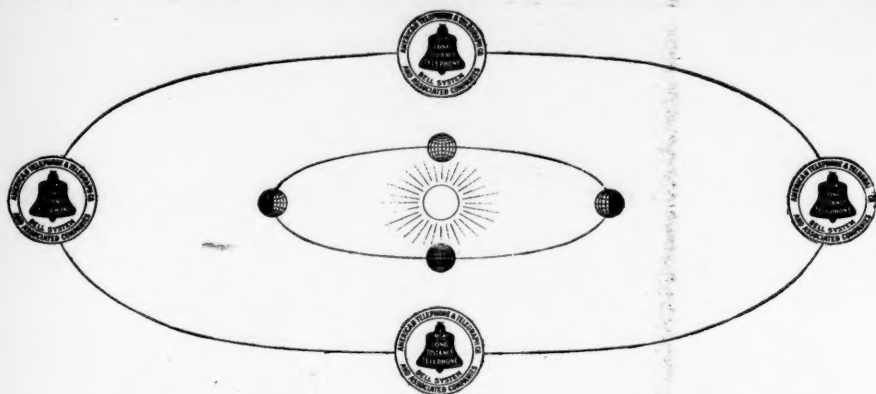


of Skin and Hair with Cuticura Soap

The regular use of Cuticura Soap, assisted when necessary by Cuticura Ointment, does more for poor complexions, red, rough hands, itching scalps, and dry, thin and falling hair than all other methods combined. Purest, sweetest and most economical for toilet, bath and nursery.

Sold throughout the world. Depots: London, 27, Charterhouse Sq.; Paris, 10, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin; Australia, R. Towns & Co., Sydney; India, B. K. Paul, Calcutta; So. Africa, Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town, etc.; U. S. A., Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., 133 Columbus Ave., Boston.

Free, from Boston or London depots, samples of Cuticura Soap and Ointment, with 32-p. booklet.



Comparison of the Distance Traveled by Earth and Bell Telephone Messages

The Orbit of Universal Service

In one year the earth on its orbit around the sun travels 584,000,000 miles; in the same time telephone messages travel 23,600,000,000 miles over the pathways provided by the Bell system. That means that the 7,175,000,000 Bell conversations cover a distance forty times that traveled by the earth.

When it is considered that each telephone connection includes replies as well as messages, the mileage of talk becomes even greater.

These aggregate distances, which exceed in their total the limits of the Solar system, are actually confined within the boundaries of the United States. They show the progress that has been made towards universal service and the intensive intercommunication between 90,000,000 people.

No such mileage of talk could be possible in such a limited area were it not that each telephone is the center of one universal system.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

One Policy

One System

Universal Service

Tell your newsdealer: "Deliver this magazine to me each month."

'HAVE YOU A LITTLE 'FAIRY' IN YOUR HOME?'



Fairy Soap is Popular Because of its Purity

Scores of soap makers have tried and failed to popularize a white toilet and bath soap. Fairy soap succeeded for two reasons—its purity and the handy oval shape of the floating cake. We put into Fairy soap none but the choicest soap ingredients. We cannot afford to trifle with a success for the sake of a little added profit. Try a 5c cake of Fairy Soap and convince yourself.

THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY
CHICAGO



XUM

Scour Pots and Pans with

Old Dutch Cleanser

Cuts the "grease," "burn"

Tinware

Agateware

Aluminumware

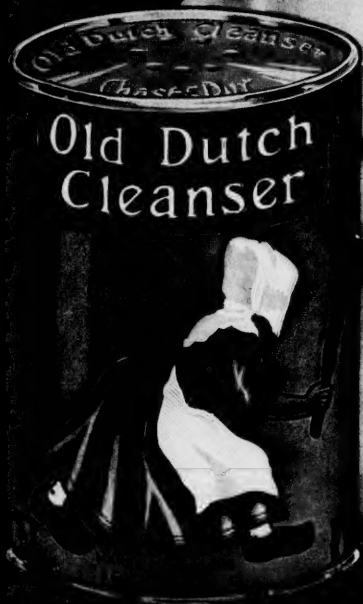
Graniteware, etc.

Avoid

Caustic or acid

on all

Food Utensils



Other Uses & Full Directions on Large Sifter Can 10"